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KING POPPY

BY·THE·EARL·OF·LYTTON

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KING. POPPY.

Γράφω τοίνυν περὶ ὧν μήτε εἶδον μήτε ἔπαθον μήτε παρ' ἄλλων ἐπυθόμην, ἔτι δὲ μήτε ὅλως ὄντων μήτε τὴν ἀρχὴν γενέσθαι δυναμένων.—LUCIAN, *Veræ Historiæ*, lib. i.

"Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy."—*Hamlet.*

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INTRODUCTION.

THIS poem, conceived in 1872, and first put into verse in 1874, was never entirely out of its author's hands, and was almost rewritten during the latest years of his life. It was Lord Lytton's favourite creation, the one upon which he bestowed the most persistent and loving labour. The poem in its first form was written in little more than four months, but the work of perfecting it was a slow process, and he would often devote days to the choice of a single word. He was zealously revising it in the summer of 1887, when he was appointed ambassador to Paris. The revision, however, went on in the intervals of leisure, and before the end of 1890 he had finished his corrections, and brought the poem to the form in which it now appears.

The following extracts from private letters may serve to give some idea of the general scope and character of the work in Lord Lytton's own words.

Writing to a friend in 1874, he says :—

"For the last two or three years I have been haunted by the notion of a longish poem which has now

sufficiently ripened in my fancy to enable me to give you a very rough sketch of its general character. The idea of it grew out of a vein of fancy which first suggested the Fables, and which the Fables have kept running. It belongs to the same group and class of compositions but is more ambitious. It is entirely fantastic, a sort of fairy tale. Proposed title, King Poppy. The story is supposed to be told by Horatio, quondam Chamberlain to H.M. the King of Dehmark, to whom Prince Hamlet bequeathed all those things in heaven and earth which are not dreamed of in our Philosophy." *

Again in 1880 he writes: "The purpose of it so far as it has any definite purpose is not to prove that all is vanity, but to suggest what a poor tissue of unreality human life would be if the much despised influence of the Imagination were banished from it. I think that the practical tendency of all the most popular formulas of social and political improvement *is* to exclude the imaginative element from the development of character and society, and to ignore its influence * * * Holding this view, it was a relief to me to write King Poppy, and a sort of whimsical enjoyment to contemplate my own image of the perfection of Government conducted by a puppet. Apart from this the more purely literary idea I had

* In the original draft of the poem Horatio played a considerable part. He has since been suppressed, nothing being left of him but his sayings in the marginal notes.

in this poem was to shape out vaguely a sort of Golden Legend from the most venerable and familiar features or fragments of the fairy tales and ballads which float about the world, and which our wise generation relegates to the nursery. The Sleeping Princess, the Enchanted Palace, the Flying Horse, Gamma Gurton, the Old King, and the Young Shepherd, who are the stock characters of the generic fairy tale; and then the Good Fairy or tutelary genius of this impossible little world, who directs the destiny of its more favoured inhabitants. But if I dotted all my 'i's' and crossed all my 't's' what would became of Phantasos? and enough of this pedantic attempt to tell you what I meant the poem to tell for itself indirectly in its own way."——

The frontispiece and the design of the title-page are contributions to the work by Mr. Edward Burne-Jones, to whom the Author's family desire to take this opportunity of expressing their most grateful thanks.

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NOTE.

THROUGHOUT this book, the rubric running by the margin is to the text as a catalogue to a gallery of pictures. For when some painter has embodied in the images of a man and woman his conceptions of strength and beauty, then says the catalogue, 'This is Mars, and that Venus;' adding, perhaps, that the divinities so named are there represented in the persons of the King of France and the Queen of Navarre. As much, and indeed much more, is said by the picture itself. But the picture says it in one language, and the catalogue in another: and of those who interrogate the picture, some, it may be, would miss the answer to their question, did they not read it in the language of the catalogue. Yet neither can the catalogue tell them all they ask.

PROLOGUE.

LEGEND.

PARENT of unremember'd multitudes,
Oblivious Earth, whose immemorial youth,
(Old Age's elder, and of burial born)
Gone with the red leaf, with the green returns!
Full many, mortals and immortals both,
Coming and going hast thou seen, O Earth,
That, gone, return not; and to thee no more
As once they came shall come, with gifts divine
Thy woods and streams and vales and hill-tops haunting,
Those vanisht guests, the gods of other stars.

There is a legend, the low-breathing wind
In Spring-time whispers to the trees and flowers,
That some good gift on every flower and tree

Cui numen ademptum.

When men were few upon the earth, they gave a

A guardian god or goddess once bestow'd.
Pan made the reed melodious : Artemis
With mystic influence fill'd the moonfern : Zeus
The cypress, Cybelè the pine, endow'd
With solemn grace : blithe Dionysus pour'd
The strength of his indomitable mirth
Into the sweet orbs of the cluster'd vine :
Ethereal azure from Athenè's eyes
The dim veins of the violet imbued
With pensive beauty : Cythereia's kiss
Crimson'd the balmy bosom of the rose :
Leaf of unfading lustre Phœbus gave
To the green laurel : washt in Herè's milk,
White shone the immaculate lily : and the ripe corn
Demeter robed in Oriental gold.
God-gifted thus, the rich earth's dusky breast

glowing faith to many gods; but presently waxing many, they began to grudge cold credit even to the few gods left. Who then, departing, bore Faith back with them to Heaven; and men, missing Faith, invented Knowledge. All that Knowledge knew how to invent was doubt of everything by men invented. So that men's inventions endure but for a season; and, as they come, they go. Not so the leaves and blossoms that, going, come again. Whereby the divine beauty of the earth renews itself, and is forever. For the gifts of the gods outlast men's faith in the heavenly givers of them. And they, before they left it, clothed Earth's naked earthliness with starry flowers that, turning filth to fragrance, are sweeter than the flowerless stars.

Gleam'd, with innumerable hues adorn'd,
As heaven's gay bow. But of all flowers that throng'd
That undeserted garden of the gods
The fairest deck'd Demeter's maiden child,
In Enna blooming for Persephonè.
Her, for the sake of her sweet dower, the lord
Of barren Orcus in forced nuptials bore,
A ravisht bride, to his abysmal home.
But frustrate was the boisterous theft of Dis,
To whose inhospitable realms transferr'd
Her floral treasures perish'd—all save one,
And that one the least beautiful of all.
A plain wild Poppy it was, of common kind,
With cup faint-scented, and as pale in hue
As the white bosom where it slept unseen
When he in haste from Enna's bowery meads,
And her scared maidens, snatch'd her. This shut flower
In its delicious sanctuary escaped

Here beginneth the Legend of the Poppy, which sheweth the true cause of the Rape of Proserpine.

Of whose flowers only one remained alive in the Land of Death.

The suffocating pestilence that broods
For ever above the Acherontian Fen,
Fatal to mortals; and beneath her zone
The virgin found, when she disrobed herself,
Its snowy-petall'd blossom. 'Twas the last
Of all things lovely in her life on earth
The touch of Death had turn'd not into dust,
And she would fain have saved it. But she knew
That long unhurt in Death's morose domain
It might not linger, nor returning pass
The Stygian Ferry with Death's toll unpaid.

She consulteth Morpheus how she may best preserve its life.

Obscure and wavering, as the windy pines
A midnight storm's convulsive glare reveals
Thro' lurid gaps, along the halls of Hell
Plutonian Princes bow'd their vassal heads
In homage to Persephonè. With these
Was one of softer aspect than the rest,
Who, in the semblance of a sleeping child,
On bat's wing borne came wafted from afar.

Caressingly his little shoulder propp'd
His pillow'd brow, with sallow hops encircled,
And silent as the falling of the snow
His flight he wing'd. To him her vext desire
To save this living object of her love
The goddess of the loved who live no more
Confided. "Queen," the Son of Hypnos said,
"Eternal slumber hides from life's unrest,
And death's undoing, those my wings enfold
In sable silence." "Tush!" the goddess cried,
"Eternity of slumber, is that all
Thou hast to offer one not yet awake?
Keep for the weary thine unvalued boon,
Or store it where, in mockery of them both,
Delusive sculpture mimics life and death,
Possessing neither." Morpheus murmur'd, "Sleep
Thou wilt not, and no other gift have I.
But Lethè, the blind sister of my sire,
Could give thy favourite Forgetfulness."

"For him," she said, "'tis happiness preserved,
Not happiness forgotten, that I crave.
How shall I help, where hide, him? Whom invoke
For his protection?" "Me!" a merry voice
Responded, sweet and sudden as the note
Of an exultant skylark. Locks of light
With blossoms girt, and dripping splendid dews,
Flow'd from the radiant forehead of the boy,
If boy it were, whose penetrative eyes
Glow'd on Demeter's Daughter. Their regard
Redden'd her white cheek, *that beneath it burn'd*
Bright as the faded fire a breath revives
In hueless ashes, as she answer'd, "Thou!
Who art thou? Ganymede, or Love?" He smiled
Mysteriously; and, answering in his stead,
"Beware of him!" the God of Slumber sigh'd,
"It is my madcap brother, Phantasos,
The fairest of our kindred, and most false.

And giveth ear to the voice of Phantasos, the Founder of Romantic Art,

Whose deings are an abomination to his brother, the Guardian of Classic Poppy.

Too calm for his quick essence, and too cold,
Our classic clime; nor even to Hermes known
That wild exuberant region of Romance
His footstep, follow'd by the future, roams."
The Apparition, lightly turning, laugh'd,
"Disloyal brother! Is it thus forsooth
Of me thou speakest when awake? Go, sleep,
Ungrateful one, and with a glad remorse
Acknowledge my beneficence! The lean
And hungry nights that in thy void abode
Devour each other, for thy sake, I feed
On fairer hours than all that dancing strew
Roses and lilies round Aurora's car."
"Ay," mutter'd Morpheus, "for thou paintest time
With truthless promise, and thy lies persuade
Even darkness to mistake itself for light.
Rashly I gave thee ill-requited leave
To haunt my quiet kingdom. Fool'd by thee,
Slumber is now the slave of thy deceits,

Hence between the Classic and the Romantic, endless controversy.

And waking but a memory of lost joy."
Then to Persephonè once more, "Beware,
'Tis Phantasos!" he murmur'd sighingly.
"Sole author he of those dumb dramas play'd
In the fantastic theatres of Thought
By puppet actors. For this God of Whims
Within him hath what, otherwise employ'd,
Might make him dangerous. His absurd designs
Surpass the bound and order of the world,
And ever doth he vaunt his power to build
A world all boundless in a box of bone,
Itself no bigger than a human skull."
Her drowsy monitor the goddess heard
Unheedful, and to Phantasos appeal'd,
Proserpine confides in Phantasos.
"Fair stranger, if to thee such power belongs,
O save this menaced remnant of the life
That once was mine among the flowers of earth!
For dear its little blossom is to me,
As the lone babe that on her bosom smiles

To a forsaken mother." O'er her stoop'd
The sleepless brother of the God of Sleep,
With vans that heaved impatient to depart.
"Child of Demeter, to my care confide
This sleeping mortal!" he exclaim'd. "And thou,
MEKON, the darling of Persephonè,
Thine, for her sake, shall be a throne sublime,
With endless rule above a boundless realm."
"Boundless!" she cried. "If such a realm there be,
What is the unknown name of it?" He snatch'd
The Poppy from her hesitating hand,
Waved it in sportive scorn above the brows
Of Morpheus, who was sleep-bound on the wing,
And fled away, aërial kisses wafting
From lips that, as he left her, whisper'd "Dream!"

* * * * * * *

Deep in a wondrous world where heaven and earth
Are mingled—where the living and the dead,

By whom the Poppy is borne away

Into Dream-land,

United, from their mystic union bear
Transcendent beings far as stars removed
From all that lives and dies—a wondrous world
Where yesterday, to-morrow, and to-day
Are one day and the same—the Poppy breathed
Enchanted air. And thro' its timeless noon,
Continually o'er the fields of sleep
Coming and going, as he came and went,
Weird Phantasos, one finger at his lip,
Husht commune with the white-robed dreamer held.
And taught the language of that land:
But all he said was in a language lost,
Or learn'd not, by the wakeful and the wise.
It was the language to midsummer woods
In whispers utter'd by the evening wind;
The language warbled in their roundelays
By jubilant rivulets; and the nodding wheat
And sighing barley in low undertones
Its wordless tongue to one another lisp,
Stirr'd by the gossip bee's incredible tidings

Of deeds the Poppy in his dreams hath done.
And still the Poppy dreams ; and, dreaming still,
An empire wider than the world beholds,
Where nothing fails or fades. To longing eyes
The absent there return, nor even know
That they have been away. There, all alert
As the task'd Genius of Arabian tales,
Desire achieves impossibilities,
Laughing, "That, only? See how soon 'tis done!"
There, wishes whisper, "We have waited long
To run thine errands. Whither shall we hie?
What shall we fetch thee?" There, the crookèd path
Lies straight ; and, self-untwined, the tangled skein
Falls smooth and even. The tired traveller fares
Fleet over that immeasurable land
All in a moment, stirring not a foot ;
While the chain'd culprit on the donjon stone
In fancied innocence and freedom smiles,
Deaf to the headsman's footfall at the door.

A land of many wonders

For there the Realm of Consolation teems
With miracles of mercy, by whose aid
Misery to a dream the truth converts,
The dream to a reality. And there
A whisper'd message hath the Poppy heard,
"Behold a kingdom that awaits a king!
But who is he that can possess it? Men
Not long can live in it. The gods above,
That live for ever, know it not. To them
No need of consolation ever comes.
And thou, who should'st the monarch of it be,
Dost lack the regal robe, the kingly crown."
"Ay, but the kingly heart I lack not," laughs
The ambitious dreamer, "nor the regal will!"
And all the while along the fields of sleep
Phantasos comes and goes; and all the while
The Poppy hears a husht voice, murmuring
Words to the wakeful and the wise unknown.

Wherein the Poppy beholdeth his future kingdom.

* * * * * * *

'Twas night, deep night. The sevenfold heavens were thick
With throbbing stars; and thro' them, seeking rest,
Wander'd a restless and extravagant Spirit.
Horsed on a comet's hurricane of fire,
He pass'd the trembling Pleiads, and aflame
His meteoric locks behind him stream'd
Between the Lyre and Crown. "Dull Earth," he moan'd,
"Of thee I craved but freedom and repose;
Yet ever hast thou mock'd me with the choice,
Expulsion or imprisonment! And thou,
Bright foe whose hate where'er I fly pursues,

The Visible Universe is a system and order of government, whereof the Sun is lord and ruler. But in system and order Absolute Liberty hath no place. This Universe existeth only by obedience to the laws that maintain its existence. Yet neither is any law absolutely true. Therefore is it in the negation of all things that Absolute Liberty seeketh Absolute Truth. To the light that rebel saith "Thou liest!" and to every fact "Thou art a fraud!" And because, for this reason, Absolute Liberty is everywhere repressed, its fierce destructive spirit would fain find in the delirium of intoxication a momentary escape from the tormenting consciousness of an eternal and universal restraint. But there it findeth only Madness; and, allied with Madness, it haunteth the Realm of Reality. There man's place is fixed. But his faith in its foundations is troubled by the influence of that turbulent Spirit; and a fear hath fallen on him from the ever-recurrent echoes of a voice wailing through the Visible Universe, "All is illusion!" Man, therefore, doth also aspire to the attainment of a world wherein Truth and Liberty are absolute. Every path to such a world the gods, its jealous guardians, have beset with snares; and in the grape man findeth only a false guide, gained over to their cause. When the foot of the climbing mortal is on the last step of their divine sanctuary, this false guide throweth off the flattering mask, and leaveth the dupe of its flatteries grovelling on the ground.

Tormenting and intolerable Sun,
Is there from thee no refuge? Once I dwelt
Safe, as I deem'd, within the grape's dim orb;
But happiness on earth is never safe,
And I was only happy. Who betray'd
The asylum of my mystery? Men strove
To wring that mystery from the garrulous grape,
But the Sun *fears me; and, lest all I know*
To all be known, the grape with fire he fill'd,
Kindling confusion in his brain who blabs
The secret whisper'd to the grape by me.
Me, whom the world proscribes because it dreads
My mockery of its miserable dupes!"
Thus raved, in his rebellious wretchedness,
And, blind with passion, beat the eternal walls
Of the unshaken Universe in vain,

That rack'd fiend, Phrenoleptos. No escape
Did his immense and sombre prison-house
Vouchsafe the frenzied Spirit, and everywhere
He sought what nowhere could he find ; till, far
Beyond the confines of Locality,
Roaming the realms of Phantasos, he spied
The snowy-vested flutter-headed flower
That deem'd itself their monarch. "Ha!" quoth he,
"Not big with gossip as the grape art thou,
Pale visionary! and secure methinks
In thy white bosom will my secret sleep."
Then stole the world's tired exile, unrebuked,
Within the sweet heart of the Poppy's dreams.
But there the power of Phantasos transform'd
His turbulent passion's unappeasable cry
Into that sacerdotal oracle
Of Consolation's Realm, its listeners call
The "Voice of Poësy." To them that voice
Is murmuring still the secret of the world.

And "Me," it sighs, "the world doth still proscribe,
Knowing that I am Freedom, which it fears;
And men mistrust me still, for I reveal
What they deny, refute what they affirm;
And still my law is not as theirs, and still
They deem me lawless, who have here regain'd
My lost legitimate liberty. Beware,
Poor slaves of Reason, who run after Truth!
Wake her not. She is dreaming. Once awaked,
Truth will be folly. Trouble not her dreams!"

* * * * * * *

Here doth a little legend that is new grow out of a great one that is old, as the fern-froud from the hollow oak.

By all her flowery island lawns, and all
The nymph-loved hollows of Sicilian hills,
Demeter sought Persephonè. She found
'Twixt lilied Cyane's low banks afloat
The maiden's veil, but of the maiden's fate
No further trace; and from her cry forlorn
The river-nymph fled sighing to the sea.
Seaward the goddess follow'd, swift of foot,

And o'er the dark wind-furrow'd waters, clear
As shines the white wing of a glancing gull,
The flash of her unwetted sandal flew
From shore to shore. Yet, round the orbèd earth
All regions searching, news of her lost child
Nowhere to guide her did Demeter get
From gods or mortals. For the Son of Ops
Had husht with gifts his kindred deities,
And clamorous ignorance here, dumb terror there,
Guarded his secret on the lips of men.
Back to her Syracusan bowers she came,
A wandering desolation in whose path
Cornfield, and olive grove, and vineyard shed
Their blighted fruits, and perish'd. Habit's ghost,
Whose ways are backward to a goal that's gone,
Hope's place assumed, and round the loved resorts
Of a departed presence still renew'd
The search by Hope abandon'd. Roaming thus
That dale to Alpheus dear, she reach'd the fount

Within whose chilly depths a home secure
Chaste Artemis to Arethusa gave.
There all day long beside the spring she stood,
Grey, gaunt, and silent as its grotto'd rock,
In a dumb trance. But when the sun was sunk
Her anguish overflow'd. The mighty frame,
Ravaged and wasted by a grief divine,
Quick-rushing storms of sudden pangs convulsed;
And, wide outstretching from her childless breast
Arms like the lean boughs of a blasted oak,
She cried aloud. The eagle, whose lone sleep
No thunder rouses, from his sky-girt crag
Responsive scream'd; the hooting sprites that haunt
Deep mountain glens, a distant host, replied;
And night's innumerable solitudes
Shouted to one another in the dark.
"Persephonè!" she call'd. "Persephonè,"
The woods re-echo'd, and the long ravine.
That many-voiced lament the sobbing fount

Carried down earth's cold veins to it sea-source ;
Where round their urns, tired travellers from afar,
Grey river-gods repose, and Tritons stall
Their fin-tail'd steeds in azure caverns. There
'Twas heard by Arethusa. Naiad she,
And Nereid both ; to whom the hoary king
Of all the waters of the world confides
His brother's secrets and his own. For they
Between them rule the deeps, Poseidon those
Of Ocean, Pluto all that Orcus hides.
Moved by Demeter's woe, the pitying nymph
On her pure spring's oracular ripple arose,
And all the wrong by Pluto done reveal'd,
The infernal nuptials, and the ravisht bride.
Then swift, with footsteps fierce as driving storms,
To her dread goal the indignant goddess strode
The mountain tops night-laden. From her frown
The frighten'd dawn shrank, and beneath her foot

Are-thusa makes known to Ceres the Rape of Proser-pine.

The Daugh-ter of Saturn, to whom her father gave the abun-dance of the

earth, and her mother Vesta its procreative fire, follows her vanished offspring under-ground ; and the abodes of Death are invaded by the presence of a life-giving Power.

The fixt earth shudder'd, as in wrath she reach'd
That cavernous peak whose formidable crest,
Flashing and thundering, reverberates
The roar and glare of her Cyclopian Hearth.
For 'mid the smoking snows of Etna burn
For ever, fuell'd by a Titan's pain,
Unquenchable fires ; and the deep-throated gates
Of vaults that plunge to the infernal gods
There on their groaning hinges gape and rock,
Shaken by sulphurous tempests. Her broad brows
With blades of shaggy gold and blossoms blue
The glowing goddess crown'd. A giant branch
Torn from the sinews of a resinous pine
She kindled, and in clanking harness yoked
Fast to her brazen car its dragon team.
Thus fiercely charioted, her strong right hand
Above her waving that huge torch, the while
Loud in her left she shook the rattling reins,
Along the lampless chasms of nether night,

(Wild homes of hurricanes subterranean)
Crown'd with red corn she went, and robed in gems
Of Autumn, gleaming thro' a dayless world.

In the depths of Dream-land

Between the silent realms of Sleep and Death,
Demeter's dragon car for guidance paused
At Dreamland's cloudy portals, whose husht valves
At her approach roll'd open from within;
And thro' those yawning gates, all ears and eyes,
The blades and blossoms, garlanding the brows
Of the great sunburnt goddess, peep'd alert.
Deep in an evening-lighted land, that sloped
By many an undulous declivity
Of purple fold and emerald dimple, down
From summits girt with golden clouds asleep
In still abysms of azure air, to shores
Of citied promontories crown'd with towers
And gleaming ramparts acropolitan
Mirror'd in luminous waters, all alone

Upon a radiant eminence reclined
The Poppy reposes,
The kingly Poppy. Of larger growth he look'd
Than his Sicilian kindred; sweeter light
Than streams from earthly suns illumined all
His snowy vesture; and above him stoop'd
Weird Phantasos, whose procreant sorceries
Fill'd, and then emptied, and then fill'd again
With visionary images of life
Where Creative Fancy revels
That fervid stillness. Of the god's breath born,
Up the high downs with spear and pennon sprang
Resplendent armies; thick the bays beneath
With masts in thousands bristled; and o'er the plank'd
Wet wharfage merchants, mariners, and slaves
In silence
Came swarming fast. Yet silent as the march
Of sculpture round some monumental frieze,
The busy visions teem'd. Thro' column'd streets
Went festal crowds that, to the temples trooping,
Clash'd cymbals from whose kiss there came no sound;

And, thridding sacred groves, the choral dance
With rhythmic footstep heaved to flutes unheard.
Anon, life's mimic pageant disappear'd,
And o'er the re-establisht solitude
Down-gazing, in the shadow of himself,
Upon a peak in heaven a dusky god
Sat sombre. One big star above him burn'd,
And in the land below to worship him
Was neither man nor beast. Creating thus
And thus dissolving worlds at every breath,
To charm the darling of Persephonè,
Phantasos hover'd o'er the halcyon couch
Of the deep-dreaming Poppy. And there, enwrapt
By wonders, with a god to wait on him,
But lost to earth and earth's realities,
Lost to his native fields and natural life,
Again the cornflowers and the corn beheld
Their changed companion of the days of old.

And solitude: all its creations being in itself and for itself alone.

By the children of the Actual World the

pupil of Phantasos is regarded as the slave of pernicious illusions; and the Corn would fain reclaim the Poppy.

Sadly they hail'd him from afar. "Return,
Stray'd child of Nature! To thy natural world
Return, ere yet irrevocably lost
In those vainglorious visions that beget
The passion of the impossible!" they cried.
And while the dragon chariot roll'd away
Darkling, and Dreamland's gates behind it closed,
Still linger'd the importunate appeal.
"Hark, 'tis thy mother's children call thee! Home
With us, thy kindred, hers and ours again!"
No echo answer'd it. But as where'er,
Incongruously with the dawn's rebuke,
Thro' some shut house of revel a wakeful ray
Of daylight wanders, all the flaring lamps
Burn sallow, and the panting dance appears
Defaced and haggard, so thro' Dreamland went
The horror of a disconcerting change;
A troubled consciousness of something miss'd,

Whose faith in the sufficiency of the ideal life is shaken by sudden contact with realities, and the unexpected disapproval of those to whom reality is the only known measure of truth.

A doubt of what remain'd. And from that hour
The kingdom of the Poppy was confused.

* * * * * * *

The Batwing'd God came flitting thro' the halls
Of Hades. He approach'd Persephonè,
And said, "Fair Queen, I warn'd thee!" "But what fails
His measureless felicity?" she ask'd.
"Hath he not all I wish'd him, the repose
The glory, and the gladness of a god?"
"Ay," said the Son of Hypnos, "these he hath,
But in dreams only; and a mortal, he.
Hence this disorder. Heavy as despair
Reality on mortal nature weighs.
Amid the beauties and beatitudes
Of his unreal kingdom, he recalls
His waking life, his little rural home,
The narrow field where he was born, the air
He breathed on earth in common with his kind;

Morpheus explains to Proserpine how mortals are impelled, by the necessity of their nature, towards the realization of ideas; and how, if thwarted in that impulse, they pine for enjoyments unpossessed, in the midst of possessions unenjoyed.

And thus remembrance ruins his content,
Marring its grace with incongruities."
Again she question'd him. "Since when the change?"
And Morpheus answer'd, "When to these dark realms
Thy mother came, her brows were garlanded
With corn and cornflowers from the furrow'd glebe
Whose harvests her Trinacrian barns enrich.
By the dim borders where with thine and mine
My brother's kingdom marches, halt she made,
Uncertain, craving guidance at the gates
Of Dreamland's citadel. For Phantasos
At those husht gates hath minions on the watch
To proffer lone wayfarers phantom charts
Of whatsoever lands unseen they seek;
And wingèd visions that flit on before,
Illumining the vast and shadowy void

To the unseen world the dead go by many ways, but they return by none; and from them there is no report of it. For the living all ways to it lie through the realm of Phantasos, whose ways are never the same. Among the guides he appoints for the conduct of travellers entering his dominion in search of it, are Faith, Hope, Fear, and Curiosity. Each guide conducts the seeker by a different road; each road takes him in a different direction; and which is the right one, who can say? For the geography of that world is written only by those who have never reached it.

With beacon lights, he lends them. Dreamland oped
At her approach, disclosing Mekon's realm,
And all its wonders. There, when him once more
Amazed they met, the corn and cornflowers hail'd
Their old companion. O'er the fair deceits
Of Phantasos a breath their presence breathed
Of natural life, that from those golden lies
The glory for a moment chased away.
They gone, the old illusion reassumed
The power to charm, but from its charm was pass'd
The power to satisfy; and, unappeased,
The dreamer pines to realize his dream;
For now the pure impersonal delight
First felt in dreaming it, he feels no more."
"Alas," the Queen of Hades cried, "undone
Is Mekon's realm! From torment what can save
The self-tormented?" "Let the ingrate go,
Nor Fate," said Morpheus, "thwart! If wise she be,
I know not, but I know that she is strong,

And weak thy favourite. What, if his return
To Earth she wills? When thine her will forbade,
Did not the tasting of a single seed
Of that Elysian fruit, she snared thee with,
Suffice her froward purpose to defeat
The fiat wrung from Zeus?" "To earth, alas,"
The goddess answer'd, "who of mortal source
From Death's dominion can return alive?"
"From Death's dominion," Morpheus murmur'd, "none.
But Death o'er Dreamland hath no empery. There,
Where Heaven, and Earth, and Hell, in one confused
Mad welter of wild incongruities
Are intermutual, and nothing true,
All things are possible." Persephonè
Was troubled. "Summon Phantasos!" she sigh'd.
But he, whose succourable power responds
To sighs and wishes swifter than swift speech
With thought keeps pace, ere Morpheus could reply,

Was bending o'er her, radiant as a star.
"Mourn not!" he said. "If for his Mother Earth
The Earth-born pines, from her maternal breast
It skills not to withhold him. But this change,
By me foreseen, my purpose favours. Long
On earth an earthly messenger I sought,
None finding worthy of my vast design.
Now, all that fail'd me in this flower is found;
A mortal fitted to receive, preserve,
And with a boundless prodigality
Impart to mortals, an immortal gift.
On Mekon is my mystic mandate laid,
And his henceforth the mission to reveal
The Realm of Consolation to a race
Else irremediably miserable.
For him lament not! To his parent soil
My wing shall waft him, there to roam or rest
Till, from a world of subjugated woes
And pacified repinings, he hath won

Phantasos hath found his messenger.

The goodly kingdom he aspires to rule."
No answer biding, sudden as he came
The fitful god departed. And anon
The Poppy reappear'd upon the earth.
One morn he woke, and wondering found himself
Back in his native field, a common flower.
"O is it I," he mused, "whose flimsy coat
The wind thus flutters? mine, this heavy head,
And cringing neck, that hang beneath the weight
Of worlds unrealized? Within me pent,
Is glowing unemploy'd a power divine
To gladden others. But the blissful gods,
Not having aught to wish for, scorn my gift,
Wish-granting dreams. The flowers (my kin no more!)
Are self-sufficing as the gods themselves;
Beauty they lack not, and 'tis all they need.

The Poppy rejoins his earthly kindred. But in the crowd around him he is alone; his vast ambition unappeased, his goodly gifts unrecognized. Dwelling unnoticed amongst those who, though closest to him, are furthest from the knowledge of what he is, he doth yet know himself to be a king. But only by the aid of that potent discontent which is the special attribute of Humanity, can he hope to gain possession of his kingdom.

The birds from heaven, the beasts from earth, demand
No gift but what from heaven and earth they get.
But man? Insatiable mortal, made
Conscious of immortality, in thee
Methinks I see my promised kingdom! Men,
My future subjects! I have watch'd you pass,
Despondent, confident, by hope impell'd,
By fear pursued, the sport of all desires,
All wants, all whims, all passions; and, reveal'd
In every look of your importunate eyes,
I recognized a pilgrim to my realm.
Yet all unheeded still you pass me by,
For 'tis appearances, and these alone,
That men confide in. O for robe and crown!
Mankind would in my kingdom then believe,
Seeing in me the semblance of a king."
Poor crownless monarch of a realm denied,
Lowly he lived among the crowded corn
An inconspicuous life, or drooping roam'd

And meanwhile, being without the insignia of sovereignty, his kinghood is unrecognized by his destined subjects.

By many a dusty roadside unremark'd.
But when the wishful hour of sunset came,
Along the solitary fields he sigh'd,
"O thou who wast before the worlds began,
Thou, whose primordial potency uprear'd
The vast pavilions of the universe,
And call'd the stars from firmamental deeps
Sun-breeding glory-bearing source of all,
Infinite Æther, hear me, and give help!"
Obedient to the Power he had invoked,
Fine tremours search'd the lull'd air's breathless orb,
And loosed from sleep the lightest wind of those
That, moth-like, o'er rose-petall'd paths pursue
With frolic wing their desultory flight.
Over the smooth translucent pools impell'd,
A roughening darkness tremulously ran;
The wheatfields waved; and a sweet voice enquired,
"Of me what wilt thou?" "Regal robe and crown!"

He appealeth for aid to that invisible but omnipresent source of power, whence have issued all the visible manifestations of it. For this all-pervading potency feedeth the fountains of the sun with fire, and the veins of the earth with life, and thereby even the souls of men with thought. There cometh, in answer to the prayer of the Poppy, a whisper out of the West upon the wings of the Evening Wind.

The Poppy answer'd, "for a king am I."
"Fool," sigh'd Favonius, "fond ambitious fool!
The crown, a golden prison, incarcerates care
In brows beneath it pent, and heavily hangs
The blood-stain'd purple robe of royal power
About the loaded shoulders it adorns.
Such burdens, little one, thou couldst not bear."
"Ill thou divinest," the proud suppliant said,
"What force immeasurable in me resides.
Fear not to aid me!" "Be it as thou wilt!"
Reproachfully that sighing voice replied.
"The stern Fates punish the presumptuous
By granting their desires. Not mine the gifts
Thou cravest. All my gifts are gifts of peace.
The foresight of the gods hath fixt the crown
Upon the inaccessible pinnacles
Of mighty mountains, and the purple plunged
Deep underneath unfathomable seas.
He that can bring thee what thy pride hath craved

The Poppy urgeth his claim to the crown.

He is warned by Favonius of the perilous character of the gifts he craves. But in vain.

Is the dread Storm-Wind that disturbs the deeps,
And smites the summits. Him I will invoke.
Prepare thee to receive him when he comes!
His voice is terrible, and his embrace
Crushes what it caresses. Thou art warn'd."
Then, on his light wing soaring, the sweet Son
Of starry Night and starless Erebus
Glided along the Ocean's azure floor,
And roused the Petrel sleeping on the wave.
"Bird of the Storm, awake!" he cried, "thine hour
Approaches. Where is Khamsin?" "Far away,
Hid," said the Storm-Bird, "in the Nubian waste."
"Go seek him, bird, and bid him hither bring
The emblems of imperial power!" "For whom?"
"A mortal." "Khamsin to a mortal's call
No response deigns. His march hath overwhelm'd
Memphis and Thebes, and to the Pyramids

And Favonius invoketh the Storm-Kings.

The dry wind of the great desert. Him the Arabs call Khamsin; that is to say, the Fifty-fold. For he cometh before, and he followeth after the Spring Equinox: and the period of his power waxeth till the Sun hath entered into Aries, and waneth when the Sun hath left the Ram; and two score and ten are the days thereof. And by the sand that he driveth eastward Sahara is enlarged, and Ægypt menaced.

Close have his tawny cohorts laid their siege :
For all the Orient he hath sworn to give
To his beloved Sahara. Not to serve
The ambition of a mortal, Khamsin roams
Ægypt, and Æthiopia, and the lone
Arabian desert, and the Libyan wilds."
"Call, then, Sirocco!" "He is sleeping still,"
The Petrel answer'd, "where he loves to rest
In a white sea-girt city of the South
Under a purple promontory. There,
Above his sallow couch a reeky cloud
Its poison-dropping canopy suspends ;
And in his husht embrace, by slaughterous feast
To leaden slumber lull'd, about him clings
His pale bride, Pestilence. Awake them not!"
"Canst thou not bear a message to Simoom?"
"Simoom at sunset in Persepolis
High revel holds, and round his blood-red throne

Sirocco sleepeth in the soft chambers of the South; and when he waketh the death-bell tolls

Simoom hath reared his palaces above the tombs of Persian kings. At his approach the lion hideth in his lair, and the camel croucheth, and the camel-driver commendeth his soul unto Allah.

The lions tremble. But beyond the realms
Of Persia and of Araby his power
Prevails not, nor beyond the waves my wing;
Therefore to him no messenger am I."
"How fares Harmattan?" "On the scorch'd sea-shores
He builds in Guinea travelling towers of dust
To assail the Sun, his ancient enemy.
Shrouded and sudden as a glaring ghost,
Harmattan pass'd me, and I saw no more."
"Monsoon is in this season idle. Say,
Hast thou not met him on the road to Ind?"
The Petrel panted, shiver'd, and replied,
"The sun had bared the brows of Himalay,
And from Thibet's parch'd plain the tepid air
Rose higher than hath ever soar'd the roc.
Then, by the Void allured, Monsoon arose.

Harmattan haunteth the shores of Guinea. He is dry and cold; and wherever he passeth, the grass of the field and the leaf of the forest are whitened, as by a leprosy, beneath the dust of his chariot wheels. But east and west, and north and south, in calm or storm, as his humour changeth, Monsoon roameth the vast waters of the Indian Ocean. Beneath the palms of Malabar a dusky Peri rocked his giant cradle, and on the rosy shores of Coromandel shining clouds have spread the couch of his repose. Ever, when the Sun is in the southern heaven, Monsoon marcheth north and east; and when the Sun is in the northern heaven, he hasteneth south and west. For of him hath the Sun no homage. In the burning wilderness of Thurr stands, harness'd all the year, the chariot that beareth him to the feet of Himalay, laden with Ocean-plunder from the rifled treasuries of Ormuz and the isles that are rich in spice.

In deluge from the rainy deep he rush'd
Exultant, and beneath his dripping wing
All Hindustan was darken'd, till he reach'd
The Realm of the Five Rivers. Thence, sublime
Along the lonely Asian glaciers, borne
On sable clouds, whose swollen darkness flew,
Scourged white by whips of fire, he pass'd away
To his Uranian halls. And there he waits
To speed the downfall of the avalanche."
"What of Typhoon?" The Petrel rose and scream'd,
"Look yonder at Orion, and beware!
Typhoon is coming. Way for King Typhoon!"
Then, lashing with her sharp wing the white crests
Of the roused waves, the Prophetess of Storm
Fled fast before the coming of her lord.
Over the rocking seas and ravaged lands,
In fulgent state, with trump sonorous, march'd
Typhoon's insulting majesty. The tops
Of tallest forests underneath him crouch'd,

The coming of King Typhoon. Who cometh with robe and crown from the sultry seas of Cathay;

And crack'd, and trembled like the grass o' the field.
Aloft he brandish'd in his livid grasp
The streaming rags of the rent thunder-clouds,
And shrill he sang, "Both robe and crown I bring!
The crown of terror, and the robe of wrath,
A spoil'd world's gold and purple! But for whom?
Where is the giant destin'd to support
This weight of glory?" A faint infant voice
Lisp'd eager, "He is here, and I am he!"
Low stoop'd Typhoon, and search'd long while the ground.
"Thou! Who art thou, pert pygmy?" "One that claims
For what is strongest upon earth—Desire,
The robe and crown," that lisping voice replied,
And loud and long the savage Storm-King laugh'd.
"Wretched enough is Royalty," he growl'd,
"But 'tis not yet ridiculous. Empty pate,
Take that for thine ambition!" And he flung

The Poppy upon the flint. But its small root,
Fast as an anchor fixt, the shock withstood
Of him who shatters in his boisterous sport
Great Carthaginian triremes, and the tall
Phœnician galleys, as a wassailer strews
With broken cups and wine-flasks the drench'd floor
Of his disorder'd palace. "Saucy weed!"
Mutter'd Typhoon, "who granted thee the strength
Thy miserable aspect so belies?"
"'Tis Phantasos," the Poppy said. "Behold!
Not empty, as thou deemest, is my head.
Seest thou these lucid beads—in each, a world
Of beauty, sweetness, and sublimity?
These are my treasures. And as they in me
Are living now, so ages hence in them
Shall I be living. Thou dost boast of realms
Made deserts by the desolating breath
Of thy dread nostril; but not all thy power
Can overthrow the kingdom I command.

Nevertheless the Poppy, reasserting his claim to the crown, doth justify the same, undaunted by the wrath of Typhoon:

He being

by right divine, Lord Paramount of the Kingdom of Consolation.

Down from the rockt mast's windy rigging hurl
The sleeping seaman to his ocean grave,
And in the fearful moment of his fall
He will have deem'd that him some wing divine
Is bearing to the bosom of the gods.
I call back smiles to the sad lips of her
Whom thou hast widow'd in the midnight storm.
Mine is in all the world the sole domain
Death cannot enter. Kings my subjects be,
And in my lap they cast their cares away.
I gather up the fallen leaves of life,
And in a moment make them green again.
I breathe upon the worn-out hours of time,
And round the paths of unarisen suns
But Material, jealous of Ideal Force, would banish to Heaven the dreams of Earth:
My breath sustains their renovated flight."
Resentfully the sullen answer hiss'd:
"If such thy power, if such indeed thy gifts,
Rashly hast thou reveal'd them. Canst thou deem
That I, the wandering soul of him who slew

Osiris, I whose dauntless pride hath toss'd,
Untamed by anguish, unsubdued by fire,
On Etna's burning bed, will leave to men
The meek enjoyment of what far transcends
The bliss I grudge the gods? Thy vanity
Hath doom'd thee to destruction!" At the word,
The Titan Storm-King, terrible Typhoon,
Sprang with a shout on that pale King of Dreams,
And strangled him, and twisted off his head,
And with the trophy thro' the starr'd abyss
Soar'd up into the solitudes of space,
Beyond the watch-fires of the Universe.
There, thro' the lone translucent void, Typhoon
Scatter'd the silver seeds of golden dreams.
Where'er they fell, from flowers to stars they turn'd,
And in that pure ethereal field put forth
A multitude of pallid radiances,
By wondering mortals call'd "The Milky Way."
But one of them, one seedling of a dream,

And the Poppy is wounded and taken captive.

Aided by Favonius, and carried like Anchises by his offspring, he escapeth from his captor, bearing with him the saved secret of his power.

That in its little germ perchance contain'd
Undream'd-of dreamlands, on the way was lost
Twixt earth and heaven. Favonius all this while,
Rockt as a cradled infant in the robe
Of the rough Storm-King, watch'd the whirling seeds.
But he, the patron of the hopes of earth,
Pitied their floral prophet's desperate plight,
And from the turgid mantle of Typhoon
Caught in his fragrant bosom, as it fell,
This wandering grain. There was a rocky isle
Where no man dwelt, and whither nothing came
But winds, and birds, and the storm-billow'd waves
Of a wild sea. Favonius, hovering here,
Whisper'd, "Last germ of an ideal world
Rejected by the mighty, wait in hope
Thy promised hour! The gifts thou didst demand
I could not give thee. But I give thee now
A gift the punctual Destinies deny
To sceptred kings—illimitable time!

Which, with good counsel to the discomfited aspirant, Favonius conceals among the rocks of an uninhabited island: ...

From wistful slumber, oft as spring returns,
My breath shall wake thee to a life renew'd ;
And thou, survivor of a thousand storms,
Shalt greet a thousand summers with the smile
Of an invincibly re-orient bloom.
Never, child, never will the hands that grasp
The globe and sceptre yield thee crown or robe !
The gold is for the great, for the supreme
The purple. Neither Pomp nor Glory grant
To thee their emblems. But the little hand
Of Childhood opens lightly, and its gifts
Are tendernesses that are given ungrudged.
Seek, then, poor child, from other children seek
What Childhood gives—its rosy-mantled mirth,
Its diadem of innocent delight,
Such robe and crown as never king yet wore !"
And lightly, softly, as her sleeping babe
Safe to its shelter'd cot a mother bears,
Earthward that orphan seed Favonius wafted,

And laid it in the crevice of a crag.

And there, sown by a fleeting hope in a barren soil, the rescued germ of worlds unborn puts forth a dubious blossom.

Tenaciously the grateful crag's stout heart
Conceal'd the rescued treasure; and anon
To the thin root that from it crept and craved,
Feeling about for nurture and support,
Three gifts vouchsafed—(the crag's own attributes)
Loftiness, loneliness, and steadfastness.
So still the Poppy dream'd; and still his dreams
Were of an empire wider than the world,
A royal mantle, and a kingly crown.
And still the ages came, the ages went;
But him they brought no grander gifts than those
The guardian rock had given him. All alone,
With neither robe nor crown nor kingdom, he,
Dreaming of kingdom crown and robe to come,
Awaited the fulfilment of his dream.

Of that I shall have also cause to speak.—HORATIO.

KING POPPY

I.

THE COURT.

Now, once upon a time there was a king.
King of a country once upon a time
Call'd Diadummiania, was he.
His kingdom's capital was Diadum,
And Diadummianus was his name.

This simple statement—"Once upon a time
There was a king, *et cætera*"—may appear
Somewhat indefinite to all whose minds
Have by Geography been prejudiced,
Or warp'd by History; for such folks persist
In always asking (just like children) where,

Supplies a missing chapter of the Almanac de Gotha.

And describes a land undreamed of in Geography.

And when, and how things happen'd. To appease
Their puerile curiosity, the world
Acknowledged by Geography contains
Those places only that a man may reach
By sea or land, incurring as he goes
The risk of being sea-sick, ship-wreck'd, drown'd,
Robb'd by inn-keeping rogues along the road,
Or search'd upon the frontier by police.
Neither by land, however, nor by sea
Need travellers any sort of risk incur
In reaching Diadummiania,
And therefore it is mention'd on no map.
Yet where else could have happen'd all the things
About to be related in this book?
Certainly not in England. Anywhere
Except in Diadummiania
They would have been impossible. 'Tis true

Which is an exact science; as is proved by the well-known fact that, when a geographer has disappeared without leaving his address, and it is *nearly* certain that he has met with some fatal disaster, Geography, at great expense, equips an expedition to make *quite* certain of it. For such is the exactitude of this science, that it takes no account of the mere probability of disaster, however great; whilst, on the other hand, it has furnished us with accurate knowledge of the actual occurrence of a vast number of extraordinary disasters, which, but for geographic research, might never have occurred.

That Diadummiania as yet
Is unacknowledged by Geography;
But this, tho' true, proves nothing. The north pole
Geography acknowledges with pride;
And yet, instead of it, discoverers find
Only the frozen carcasses of those
By whom 'twas not discover'd. True it is,
Moreover, that to none of the events
In this authentic chronicle set forth
Hath History any notice yet vouchsafed.
But what of that? Geographers at least,
Even when they find not what they seek, succeed
In sometimes finding what they have not sought;
And then, by merely finding it, they prove
That what they happen to have found, exists.
But what Historians seek exists no more,
And what they find is but a record left

Thus, the labours of Geographers promote the knowing of the previously Unknown.

Whereas those of Historians tend to the unknowing of the previously Known: the oldest historical fact being always soluble by the newest historical theory.

Of something which, for aught that record proves,
May never have existed. *Scripta manent!*
Ay, and the Ministerial Journalist,
Whose scripture daily decks our morning meal,
To coming ages glowingly presents
Pictures of how this favour'd realm of ours
Its present gifted government preserves
From every possible peril, and endows
With countless blessings coveted in vain
By all the other nations of the world.
What past was ever such a present? Turn
The first page of the Opposition Print,
And all those glowing pictures melt in gloom.
If History's prime architect, blind Chance,
Of these two scriptures should select the first
For the instruction of the babes unborn,
Posterity will certainly affirm
That in the west of Europe, at the close
Of that enlighten'd century, the nineteenth,

There bloom'd a better'd Arcady. But ah,
The second scripture may the first survive,
And then, in after ages, by mistake
Folks will confound Great Britain with Byzant.
The scripture stays, the truth escapes—perchance
In flying words; and men the meaning miss
Of '*Scripta manent, verba volant.*' Words,
Fugitive migratory words, there be,
That birdlike hover in the air, and fleet
By ways invisible from land to land.
In every language they have left behind
Their lingering echoes. Native air they breathe
In every clime, and every folk believes
It was the first to hear them. Round the world,
Safe over shipless seas, untrodden wastes,
And mountain tops impassable, they pass.
Their passage none can stop, none stay their flight,
Nor set the uncertain course of it. But, fraught
With intimations from afar, in flocks

Authorities consulted by the Diadumenian historian.

Their antiquity and popularity.

Or singly, here and there they settle down
Unbidden; and where rural homes abound
They build, and brood, and, singing, fill men's hearts
With wonder, and men's memories with song.
That song in written speech no more abides
Than the lark's music, or the nightingale's,
And Science scorns it. But the untutor'd folk,
Whose bookless lore was old ere hers began,
List to it, love it, learn it, and transmit
Traditions of its truth from age to age.
'Tis they whose witness warrants our belief
That once upon a time there was a king,
And Diadummianus was his name.

A United Kingdom.

His was a goodly kingdom. Safe asleep
There in its birthplace Monarchy reposed.
No otherwhere, nor ever since that once,
Hath such a kingdom been. Time's restless waves
The wandering cradle of the nations waft

Hither and thither; and to every shore
That gives it shelter that toss'd bark bequeathes
A handful of invaders. In the blood
Of its inhabitants these bandits soak
The soil that gives them hospitality;
And, when no drop of native blood remains,
They patriotically shed their own
For what they call their native land, a realm
Foreign itself, by foreigners possess'd.
But hoary Monarchy's dim childhood slept
In Diadummiania secure
Where it was born: and to the king the land,
As to the babe its mother's breast, belong'd;
He to the land, as its indigenous hills
And immemorial forests. Now, the throne
Of Diadummiania had pass'd
Age after age from princely sire to son
In male succession, till this tale begins;
When, after many a year of hope deferr'd

Her Majesty the Queen was brought to bed.
The public duty tardily perform'd
On that occasion was her life's last act.
But on the day before she left this world
Her Majesty most graciously vouchsafed
To introduce to it (with due regard
To all court rules for royal births and deaths)
A little princess: who, as soon as born,
Was christen'd Diadema. When the King
Heard that his Heir Apparent was a girl,
His royal mind was mightily perplex'd.
Never before had such a case occurr'd,
And no provision for it could be found
In any of the statutes of the realm.
The Court Physician fell into disgrace
In consequence of this untoward event;
For which all felt that someone was to blame,
And if not he, then who? He had deliver'd
The Queen in her own presence, and of a child

Death of the Queen Consort.

And birth of the Princess Diadema.

Which gives rise to a dynastic difficulty.

Disgrace of the Court Physician.

Whose sex was contrary to precedent!
The funds went down: the oracles went wild:
The weathercocks went every way about
And back again, for they no longer knew
Which way to turn. These minatory signs
Alarm'd the Government: and, with concern,
The Minister of Public Safety learn'd
From the Inspector General of Police
That lately in the streets of Diadum
The sanguinary and seditious cry
Of *Cherry Ripe* had more than once been heard.
That was the revolutionary song,
The Diadummianian *Marseillaise.*
Whenever it was heard about the streets
You might be sure that things were getting hot.
A Deputation, led by the Lord Mayor,
Proceeded to the Palace; where, the King,
Acting upon his ministers' advice,
Was graciously, with much displeasure, pleased

Disturbed state of public opinion.

And increasing popular excitement.

To give it audience. The Lord Mayor, in terms
Respectfully but firmly out of place,
Address'd his Majesty; referring first
To cases teeming with embarrassments
Of various kinds which, having all occurr'd
In previous reigns, might happily have served
As precedents for this particular case,
Had they in aught resembled it. He next
Express'd a hope, unflatteringly faint,
That still, henceforth as heretofore, the Crown
Of Diadummiania might be
With undiminish'd dignity maintain'd;
With Petition of Rights. And nothing ever suffer'd to deprive
Its loyal subjects of their right to pay
For trying, every now and then, new kinds
Of gunnery against new kinds of scarps
And counterscarps, on territories own'd
By foreign princes: thus promoting peace,
Which States would have no opportunity

Of making, if they never went to war.
These patriotic duties of the Crown
Concern'd the People ; who, altho' it paid
For their performance, had some cause to fear
That, if the Crown were clothed in petticoats,
Its feminine possessor might not feel
The proper manly pride in them display'd
By those great princes who, before her birth,
(Which so unconstitutionally changed
The Constitution's sex) had grandly worn
The cock'd hat, leather breeches, and jack boots
Of Diadummianian Majesty.
The People's claim to its full money's worth
Of national discomfort and renown
Was with appropriate amplitude set forth
By Diadum's chief magistrate : who thus
Concluded his remarkable address—
" Sire, of all subjects, to your subjects all,
Taxation is the dearest, and indeed

Speech by the Lord Mayor.

'Tis growing annually dearer still.
For hitherto the right of being tax'd
To none except convicted criminals,
Paupers, and lunatics hath been denied."

Attitude of the Municipal Body.

He ceased: and, but for that impetuous rush
Of quite ungovernable self-restraint
The Royal Presence commonly call'd forth
In those admitted to it, loud applause
From all his fellow-worthies would have hail'd
His eloquent oration's welcome close.
Since courtly etiquette, however, check'd
Their rising cheers, the Aldermen remain'd
Emphatically mute, with lips compress'd,
And looks down bent, whilst one of them began
To scratch his ear, and tight in puckers shut
The corresponding eye; implying thus
The feeling of the City, that affairs
Were ticklish, and the civic outlook dark.

The King alarmed.

Across the King's distracted fancy came

A horrible suspicion there might be
Some meaning latent in the Lord Mayor's speech ;
And to the Chancellor, in great alarm,
He whisper'd, "What the Dickens does he mean ?"
The Chancellor evasively replied,
"Ah, what a lord mayor means must be confess'd
One of the greatest mysteries ! But Sire
Excuse me. I was thinking, and I think
That I have an idea." "Never mind !
We trust you none the less," the King replied.
"If you could understand a word he said,
Answer him ! But be short ! And pray, my Lord,
Be careful not to compromise the Crown !"
The Chancellor was never at a loss
To answer anyone. With grace severe,
Forward he stepp'd : and everybody felt
The Government by that judicious step
Had strengthen'd its position. Forth he drew,
And thrice sedately tapp'd, the jewell'd box

Wherein he carried his pulvilio.
This made a deep impression. The belief
Had long been prevalent in Diadum
That the Lord Chancellor was capable
Of anything, when driven to a pinch.
"Sire," said His Excellency, "we propose
To meet the dangerous contingency
His Worship has sagaciously foreseen,
By levying all the taxes in advance."
That was the great Lord Chancellor's idea,
And it was then a novel one. Meanwhile,
The Lord Mayor at an open window stood;
In order, if occasion should arise
For such a public duty, to step out
Into the balcony, and thence harangue
The populace below it. The Lord Mayor
Was puzzled by the Chancellor's idea.
He knew not whether it conceal'd a trap,
Or granted a concession. Oft before

And puts forward his financial policy.

The Lord Mayor's pocket-handkerchief

In similar positions he had found,
When doubting what to say, or how behave,
That by the simple blowing of his nose
He both gain'd time and also clear'd his head.
So from his pocket thoughtfully he pull'd
His pocket-handkerchief. A little breeze,
That round the open window chanced to blow,
Flutter'd the handkerchief; and this produced
Responsive flutterings in the crowd beneath.
His Worship felt the moment had arrived.
Into the balcony he stepp'd, and there
To the expectant multitude he waved
His pocket-handkerchief. Whereat the mouths
Of all the multitude with one accord
Began to cry aloud, "*Long live the King!*"
It was the merest chance they did not cry,
"*Long live the Revolution!*" or begin
Singing in chorus that seditious song
Of *Cherry Ripe!* But for their loyal cheer

Is used with the happiest effect.

A theory of colours not anticipated by Newton. *Crede colori!*

There was a cause, a reasonable cause,
Altho', no doubt, an accidental one.
For different colours act upon a crowd
In different ways. Above it boldly wave
A red flag, and forthwith it is THE MOB,
A white one, and as quickly it becomes
"THE KING'S DEVOTED PEOPLE." Had the hue
Of the municipal signal, then display'd,
Unluckily been red instead of white,
Everything might have instantly gone wrong,
And everybody been dissatisfied.
But luckily 'twas white instead of red,
So everything went well, and everyone
Was satisfied. Except, perhaps, the King;
Who seem'd not altogether pleased to see
His subjects so concern'd about a crown
Which, after all, was *his* crown and not *theirs*.
Proud of his pocket-handkerchief's effect

Upon the public mind, and quite convinced
That in his pocket he was carrying
His country's future fortunes, the Lord Mayor
Took from a Page, who follow'd in his train,
A crimson velvet cushion, only used
On great occasions, when it served to bear
The keys of Diadummianian towns,
Presented, with a patriotic speech,
By their municipal authorities
To the besieging enemy. Therewith
The cradle of the Princess he approach'd,
Knelt on one knee, and from a ribbon'd scroll
Read to Her Royal Highness this address—

Congratulatory address to the Crown Princess

"Moost myghty Pryncesse!
We, ye bvrghesses
And cyte covnceyllors of Diadvm,
Desyre on thys occasyon to professe
More pleasyr than can possybly be felte

That yow haue condescendyd to be borne.
We dotyfully hoped yow wold haue deygned,
Moost myghty Pryncesse, to be borne a pryncе.
But, fylled with pyous & unbobnded feythe
In ye mystakes of Prouydencé, our hertes
Welcom Your Royal Hyhenes with a joye
More easely descrybed than bnderstood."

Strange behaviour of Her Royal Highness.

The little Princess to these loyal words
Listen'd, whilst sucking, with serene assent,
In her sweet, warm, wet rosebud of a mouth
A Gingerbread Gilt Captain of Dragoons.
This military sweetmeat was a gift
Presented to her by his Majesty
To please the Army. The Lord Chancellor,
However, whose all-watchful eye was fixt
Upon the Princess and the gay Dragoon,
With secret agitation now perceived
That brilliant, but too favour'd, officer

A military officer loses his head at a critical moment.

Had lost his head. At once, with timely tact,
The wary minister stepp'd in between
The cradle and court-circle. "My Lord Mayor,
Her Royal Highness has received," said he,
"With the appreciation it deserves
Your loyal and appropriate address."
These words politely signified, "Be off!
The ceremony's over." For a time
Appearances were saved by this device,
And without comment the bad omen pass'd.
But later on (for after the event
Predicted by them all prognostics thus
Excite attention) when the next sham fights.
A failure proved, the Opposition Press
Noticed the fact, and bitterly remark'd,
"If our ideal military type
Has lost his head, what have we to expect
From all our actual military heads?"
The Chancellor submitted to the King

Presence of mind displayed by the Lord Chancellor.

Dismissal of the Deputation.

Opinions of the Press.

Prosecution for libel.

A note requesting leave to prosecute
The writers of those libellous words, "design'd
Unpatriotically to impair
The State's external safety," he observed,
"By casting doubts on the efficiency
Of Diadummiania's martial power."

The King maintains the efficiency of the Army.

Whereon His Majesty thus minuted:
"*Fiat.* The nation should be reassured.
Our gallant army may with confidence
Be counted on to beat whatever force
Is weaker or less skilful than its own;
And more than this no army can achieve.
As for our Generals, we know them fit
To frighten anyone. They frighten us."

So ended that most memorable day.

A Privy Counsellor not in the Privy Council.

But, when the Deputation was dismiss'd,
His Majesty in secret sought advice
From one whose influence o'er the royal mind,

Being a backstairs influence, had it been
To his unconscious Cabinet betray'd,
Would, as he knew, most probably have caused
A ministerial crisis. For the King
On all important matters, ever since
His prosperous accession to the throne,
Had privately consulted his old nurse,
Dame Rhoda. Long past active service now,
And placed upon the Pension List, she still
Her rank and title at the Court retain'd,
As Grand Hereditary Head Nurse: rank
That, by its code, the Official Hierarchy
Of Diadummiania recognized
As full equivalent, in Civil Grade,
To that of a Lieutenant-General
In military dignity, or else
To the position on the Navy List
Of a Vice-Admiral. The Titular Head
Of the State's Lactary Department, she;

Official ranks, civil, military, and trophophoric.

Chief Marshal of the Mammelary Corps
Of Body Guards about the Royal Babes
Of Diadummianian Dynasties.
And, tho' no more her matron bosom flow'd
With alimental founts for infant lips,
Yet still for comfort, as a babe for milk,
To her the old King in his troubles turn'd.

There's no offence, my lord. Horatio.

II.

THE DAME.

An old Portrait.

As wrinkled and as full of oracles
As one of wise Dodona's wither'd leaves,
Was old Dame Rhoda. Dear her homely talk
To high and low, and long her homely form
To every Diadummianian hearth
Had been familiar as a household saint's.
A little shrunken body, pucker'd, creased,
And blanch'd from top to toe beneath the weight
Of whitening years, but animated still
By a brisk birdlike spirit, nose sharp-beak'd,
And eye that twinkled as a spark the dew
Hangs in some cobwebb'd hollow of a gnarl'd

And rifted thorn, were hers. High snowy ruff,
High peakèd hat, high shoe with scarlet heel,
High scarlet-broider'd stomacher, she wore,
And gaily-quilted petticoat. The staff
Crutch-handled, 'twas her wont to lean on, seem'd
Rather to guide and grace than to support
Her nimble footsteps. A divining rod
Perchance it was ; for no suspicious hole
Or corner did its ferule leave unprobed,
No stone unturn'd that hid a sullen toad,
Or clod that covert to a shrew mouse gave :
And smartly, as she stept, it struck the ground
With a precise authoritative tap,
As tho' it were Dame Wisdom's pursuivant.
Her birth and birthplace were forgotten things,
But things forgotten she remember'd well ;
And (like a stream that, chattering blithe and brisk
By cottage doors, hath in it all the while
Mysterious sounds, the reminiscences

Of mountain lands) her talk, tho' trivial, teem'd
With startling tones and accents that belong'd
To the lost language of a far-off time.
Full many a tale beneath the harvest moon
Home with their sheaves the merry gleaners brought,
Full many a song the houseless herdsmen sung
At midnight sitting by their mountain fires,
Of old Dame Rhoda and the days of old.
And aged gossips, when December's dim
Short days were shutting, and the ingle glow'd
(While round it, husht to hear their whisper'd talk,
The young ones gather'd) could a time recall
When they themselves had in their childhood heard
How once, on some such other winter's eve,
At that same hour Dame Rhoda pusht the latch,
And enter'd in, and by the hearth sat down,
And forthwith to the house familiar seem'd
As those that were beneath its rooftree born.

History is dated, for it begins and ends. But Tradition is eternal; and any date, however ancient, would rejuvenate eternity. The idea of eternity embodies itself only in types: and the eternal type of Tradition is an embodiment of the faith of Childhood in the form of Old Age. In its grotesqueness is its comeliness; and to it superstitions and myths are as becoming as wrinkles and grey hairs to an old woman.

For well the family chronicle she knew
Of all their lives, and all the lives of those
Without whose lives their own had never been :
And fuller than a tombstone of good words
About the dead was her discourse. Nor stored
With portraits only was it, that surpass'd
All masterpieces of the limner's art
In rare resemblance to the buried kin
Of John and Joan, whose features still survived
In Jack and Gill, but it abounded too
In tales, as tho' by an eye-witness told,
Of things to none but an eye-witness known,
That happen'd when the hoary world was young,
And still a daily wonder to itself.

Reminiscences of an old traveller.

She knew, and she could tell, the maiden name
Of Adam's wife before he married Eve ;
The deeds by Lilith's demon children done ;
The site of cities built before the flood
By Tubal Cain ; and where the forests grew

His sons hew'd down to fuel his first forge ;
The talk that went about the streets of Thebes
When Pharaoh's daughter with a babe appear'd,
And said she found it in the bulrush beds ;
The whispers that were heard in Memphian halls
When Rhampsinitus chose for son-in-law
The wily robber with the dead man's hand ;
And what it was set laughing all the leaves
Of sacred Lebanon, as Sheba's Queen
Athwart a treacherous floor of glass, that show'd
Her secret charms, with unsuspecting steps
The throne of wizard Solomon approach'd.
And when the Dame had told them all these things,
With many more they never else had known,
She pass'd upon her way—as they supposed,
To the King's palace. Wondrous old even then
Did folks then old believe her. Wondrous old
Some deem'd her born. But all the land about

A legend lived, that in the old old days
A buxom youth was hers, and that the Dame
Was still a damsel when she oped the door
To disimprison'd Peter, as behoved
Vide Acta Apostolorum. A handmaid in the household of Saint Mark.
Howe'er that be, no damsel was she now.
Lost sciences. Learnèd she was, tho', in all lore occult;
Could find a coffin in a candlewick,
Gifts in the white spots upon finger-nails,
Troubles beneath salt-cellars overturn'd,
And funerals in the flags of sable smut
That sometimes deck'd the royal kitchen-grates.
Far future fates, moreover, could she tell
From tea-leaves, coffee-grouts, and playing-cards,
So wonderfully that the good old King
Revered her more than his Lord Chancellor,
And in her presence felt himself a child.

The King had hung his crown upon a peg,
His head in silken nightcap swathed, his feet
In slippers thrust, his vest unbutton'd, fill'd
His pipe, and closely drawn his elbow-chair
Into the chimney corner. There, well pleased,
He sniff'd the scent of Mocha beans fresh bruised
For fragrant brewage in a magic urn
Before him by the sorceress set. Meanwhile
She, bending o'er it, plied her sable spells.
Three times the black decoction rose and sank,
Heaving and sighing like a human heart
By some unquiet secret vext. The crone
Perused its mystic spasms, her cavern'd eyes
Gleaming encircled by the ebon hoops
Of sprawling spectales that bridged with black
Her bony nose. Thro' aromatic mists
Of thickening steam a great grey owl she look'd,
That, wrapt in vague and moony vapour, peers,
Watching a mouse. Her crookèd left hand clutch'd

Mon-archy is happiest and most at ease when, apart from its exter-nals, it is cherish-ed by Tradi-tion.

Dame Rhoda consults the omens.

A pack of cards, and in her right she held
A slanted mirror. As the charm increased,
Her image into that of a huge bird
With hornèd head, hook'd beak, and saucer eyes,
Was slowly changing, when the magic glass
Suddenly from her palsied claw she dropp'd
Into the black and scalding sediment,
That, scatter'd by it, splash'd the old King's cheek.
"She gives away the crown!" Dame Rhoda croak'd.
"She!" querulously cried the wincing King,
"Who's she?" "Thy daughter," groan'd the Dame.
"Pooh, pooh!
Never," he mutter'd, "child of mine could be
Such a born stup . ."——
But here he check'd himself
Abruptly, shaken by an aguish fear.
For he remember'd, only just in time,
An ancient prophecy, that if the word
He was about to utter were applied

Tradition is shocked, and the repose of Monarchy disturbed.

The King's inadvertence endangers the dynasty.

By one of the Blood Royal to the name
Of any member of the Royal House,
A dreadful secret of the dynasty
Would be divulged. The Dame, rebukeful, raised
A warning finger. "Son," she whisper'd, "hush!"
And for a while in shuddering silence each
The other eyed. Then, slowly reassured,
Up from the floor his fallen pipe she pick'd,
And, having lighted its replenisht bowl,
Bade him be still and listen. He obey'd,
And thus her vision strange the seeress told:

The answer of the Oracle.

DAME RHODA'S VISION.

"At first my sight was troubled, like my soul,
And all was dim. From heaven's four corners came
Mists upon mists, that round each other roll'd
Into a vapour glowing like a rose.
Deep in the flusht heart of this fervid cloud

Infancy and the Infinite.

"Something began to throb; and the cloud's self
Was silently unclaspt, as when a bud
Is breathed on by the Spirit of the Spring,
And turns into a blossom. Fold by fold,
Like roseleaves, all those rosy vapours oped,
And in the mellow midmost of them all
I saw our little princess—rosy too,
And looking like the babe of that rose bud.
Then for awhile the child seem'd all confused,
And rubb'd her wondering eyes, like those new-waked
Who cannot yet imagine where they are,
Nor even recollect where they have been.
Before her and around, bare pathless space
Unfolding the monotonous expanse
Of its immeasurable uncertainty,
So frighten'd her that, if she could, methought
The little creature would have crept again
Into the vaporous rose whence she was come.
But it had vanish'd, as a flower o'erblown

The Gates of Birth are closed behind the New Born.

"Whose loosened petals on the wind depart
Unnoticed, and her refuge was no more.
So timorously round her gazed the child.
And all her timorous gazes as they fell
Turn'd into falling stars, and every star
Call'd to her, 'Take me with thee!' Stooping down
She gathered up those stars, and one by one
She put them in her bosom. Thence they shed
A soft and tender light to guide her steps
Along the pathless space. And more and more,
As step by step her little star-led feet
Moved onward, other voices I could hear
Still calling to her, 'Take us with thee, too!'
One of them call'd her from her fluttering curls,
And when she raised her hand to them 'twas touch'd
By something fresh and cold that faintly sigh'd,
'I am the wind. 'Tis from the earth I come,
And it is there that thou art going. There
They all are hoping, waiting, for thee now.

What Childhood carries with it.

The universal messenger.

When will the wind cease from sighing, or the heart from wishing?

"'And me they sent to seek thee. Once my home
Was in their hearts, but there no room I found
To breathe in. For the sighing of my breath
Gives voice to all the wishes in the world,
And I am always sighing. Were I free,
I would go hither, thither, everywhere,
Forever. But I cannot leave the earth
Where I was born, and have so much to do.'

The Earth and the Moon.

And the child listen'd to the suppliant wind,
And let him lead her. When at last they came
Nearer to earth, she gazed beneath and saw
What seem'd to be a star that could not shine,
Like a blind eye that in its orbit rolls

"Why so dark, sad Earth?"

Darkly, reflecting nothing. And the child
Pitied that poor blind star, and would have thrown
One of her own sweet stars to brighten it.
But pale with fear her own star turn'd, and said,

"And why so pale, sad Moon?"

'Condemn me not to dwell in yonder world!
Let me rest here. Rather than live on earth

"'Fain would I hide me in the deeps of night,
Contented to be nothing but a moon.
But I will wait for thee in heaven, and watch
Till thou returnest. For return thou wilt,
Unhappy child! Earth is not all so sweet.'
Then the child sigh'd. And as she wander'd on
She left the moon behind her. And the moon
Lingered in heaven, and waited for her, pale,
Pensive, and patient. And the child went on.
'Welcome at last, long waited! Is it thou?
Come, then, with us! and we will show thee all,'
A tremulous choir of twittering voices cried.
The swallows they, that far across the sea
Had flown to find her. And upon their wings,
Together with the Spring, they carried her.
So o'er the sea-waves, o'er the mountain-tops,
The maiden pass'd: and, coming from afar,
The Spring came with her, and the Spring and she
Seem'd one. The wind went softly on before;

The night, that is ever between them, makes the Moon so pale and the Earth so dark, when they gaze upon each other.

And life goes on—wishing for the moon, and leaving behind it what it wishes.

Heralds and harbingers.

"And, as she follow'd, all the Ocean waves
Whisper'd, 'Child, take us with thee!' All the woods
And mountains murmur'd, 'Take us with thee, child!'
The lakes, the rivers, and the rivulets,
The vales, and dells, and lawns, and meadows sigh'd,
'Where'er thou goest, leave us not behind!'
And everything that thus appeal'd to her
Made itself small, that she might carry it.
The sea condensed itself into a pearl,
The mountains became precious stones, the woods
In one green acorn countless oaks enclosed,
The meadows dwindled to a tuft of moss,
And all the lakes and rivers were distill'd
Into a silver dewdrop, that the child
Might bear them in her bosom. But her steps
No sooner touch'd the earth than from its pores
Came voices muttering, 'Lo, at last, 'tis she,
Our promised Queen! Fast hold her!' And forth-
with

Childhood and Nature.

The Macrocosm in the Microcosm.

Terrestrial influences, of which it is unconscious, take possession of Childhood; insensibly transforming it to Maidenhood.

"A something made of multitudes of things,
Shapeless, voluminous, invincible,
As with a hundred thousand hands and arms
Embracing, drew her slowly softly down
Into the earth's deep bosom. Hidden there,
She fell asleep. Above her buried head
The little birds sang busy in the sun,
And grass and daisies sprouted. Day and night
Along their wonted undiscerning ways
Went after one another round the world,
And knew not she was sleeping underneath.
But in her bosom safe the child still held
The treasures she had gather'd as she came:
The pearl, the tuft of moss, the precious stones,
The acorn, and the drop of silver dew,
That were wide plains, impenetrable woods,
Rivers, and mountains, and the mighty sea.
There, while she slept, a watchful Dragon crouch'd,
And with his body block'd the cavern's mouth.

The Sleeping Beauty

And the Guardian Dragon.

" But thro' the earth above the fine white roots
Of flowers innumerable came creeping in,
And found her sleeping, and were fill'd with joy.
The dragon said to these discoverers,
'Say nothing! If men found our treasure out,
It would not long be ours.' The little roots
Laugh'd, 'Men? They know not even how we came here,
And what we say they cannot understand.'
But the wise Dragon answer'd, 'That may be,
Yet still I do not trust them.' Then he breathed
On all the roots, and every one of them
Became immediately as dumb as death.
Beauty will out. Nevertheless the Dragon's jealous care
Could not prevent those roots from being bathed
Silently in the sweet child's sleeping breath,
Which they transmitted to the flowers above;
And from the lips of the delighted flowers
The fragrance of it wander'd through the world.

"Nor any better could that Dragon sage
Hinder the sources of the salient springs
From listening. And those sources overheard
All that the child was murmuring in her dreams,
And carried it away, and babbled it
About the hills and dales from land to land.
Seeing the child so fair, the Dragon said,
'She will not sleep forever, and ere she wake
From all things precious must her future crown
By me be wrought.' Then for a whole year long
He suck'd the red volcanoes. Fill'd with flame,
At that year's end he cut a glittering tooth.
It was a garnet. 'This tooth's hue,' said he,
'Hath too much smoke in it.' So he inhaled
Still for a live-long year those fervid ores
Whose subterranean incandescence burns
Smokeless. His next tooth was an almondine.
'Already better, but too sombre still!'
He mutter'd. And for yet another year

While Beauty sleeps and dreams, in the self-unconsciousness of Childhood, marvellous treasures for her adornment when she wakes are secretly accumulated and prepared by the wonder-working Power that protects her slumbers.

The growing of the Dragon's teeth.

"Nothing but molten gold the Dragon drank,
Save when at times, to cool his scorching throat,
He sipp'd the morning and the evening dew.
And so he got himself another tooth,
A ruby. ''Twas the dew,' he said, 'methinks,
That brighten'd this, and too much molten gold
Is good for nobody. My throat is dry.'
Then in twelve gulps, that lasted each a month,
The sea he swallow'd, and a fourth tooth cut.
That fourth tooth was a beryl rare in hue,
Aqua Marina was the name of it,
And pale sea-green its colour. 'Not so bad!'
The Dragon sigh'd, 'But I am sea-sick now,
And need a mild milk diet.' So by night
Milk in the cold light of the moon he lapp'd,
And after the fifth twelvemonth he produced
A fifth tooth. 'Twas an opal. Better pleased,
'Wisdom,' he cried aloud 'is wean'd at last!

To make a diadem for the King's Daughter, all the years of Childhood and all the influences of Nature contribute crown jewels. And the last seems ever the best.

"'One cannot live forever upon drink.
Time to try these five teeth on solid food!'
And he devour'd the greenness of the earth,
And got another tooth, an emerald.
Then, having all devour'd, the Dragon mused,
'Now I have nothing left to live upon
But air.' And upon air, a seventh year, full
He feasted, swallowing the azure sky.
His seventh tooth was a turkis; and his eighth
A sapphire, by the ethereal firmament
(His eighth year's nurture) colour'd. 'One finds out
By trying,' said the Dragon, 'many things!'
And with a flourish of his tail he flapp'd
The sparkling stars down out of heaven, and laugh'd,
'I know not yet if they will make fine teeth,
But certainly these stars are good to crunch.'
Seven other teeth the stars contributed,
And they were crystals, yellow, rose, and white.
'One trial more,' he cried, 'and I have done!

In its glowing consummation,

"'The child for fifteen years hath been asleep.
The sixteenth year she will awake; and then
Her crown must be completed. Let me think!
The green world I have eaten bare, the sea
I have drunk dry, earth's fire is finish'd up,
The sky I have devour'd, the firmament,
And all the stars of heaven. What's left? The sun!'
And on the sun the Dragon flung himself
Hungry and fierce; and gnaw'd its burning disc
So deep that he himself at last took fire,
And burn'd, and burn'd, until he burn'd away
Into a heap of cinders. Much too much
Did he in his exorbitance attempt,
And the sun slew him. But his claws had torn
And ravaged it, and on its glorious orb
Black spots, the traces of his teeth, remain'd.
Then, when the Dragon was consumed, the child
Awoke, and from that cavern she came forth,

The crown consumes its creator, and the Dragon's teeth are shed.

The wealth unconsciously acquired by the King's Daughter during her sleep.

"Wherein she had been sleeping sixteen years.
Her footstep o'er the Dragon-cinders tripp'd
And stumbled, striking on the monster's jaw,
So steep'd in molten gold, it had become
Golden itself—a constellated crown
That gleam'd with sixteen jewels. The sixteenth
Was from the sun, and brightest of them all,
Being a diamond." Here, Dame Rhoda groan'd.
"The child," she said, "upon her little lap
Had laid the Dragon's gift, whereon she gazed
With looks of sorrowful perplexity,
As though the glare of it distress'd her eyes,
The weight of it her knees. Her listless hands,
Around it lingering, not one effort made
To lift it to her head. I would have call'd,
And told her how to wear it, but alas,
I could not. All at once I was aware
Of one who, clothed in white, with hooded brows,
And arms in eager supplication stretch'd,

She consciously gives away, as soon as she awakes.

"Stood near, and whisper'd to her. What was said
I heard not, for whene'er I strove to scan
The stranger's features down mine eyelids droop'd,
And all grew dim. The last thing I beheld
Was that the child her slighted crown had set
On that white-hooded head. Beholding this,
I cried aloud. The sound of mine own voice
Awaked me. Swift the vision fled away,
And from my hand the magic mirror fell."

To whom?

Long had the Dame ceased speaking to the King,
And still the old King spake not, lost in thought.
At last he lifted up his face, and said,
"All these strange things are neither here nor there.
The coffee-marks know, doubtless, what they mean,
But the witch catch me if I understand!"
"Son," said Dame Rhoda, "it is clear as day."
But "Clear as day!" the old King grumbled, "Dame
I in a dragon can see nothing clear

The King discusses the Oracle.

Unless I see him on a signboard. Then
'Tis clear as day that beer and bread and cheese,
With hay and straw to boot can be obtain'd
By paying for them." "Hush!" Dame Rhoda cried.
"Be careful! Speak not disrespectfully
Of dragons. Theirs is a mysterious race,
And older is their pedigree than thine.
This dragon was a dragon of good birth,
And well he loved thy daughter." "That is true,"
The King mused, "and his pardon I beseech.
'Twas a good dragon. Well my child he watch'd
For sixteen years, and made her a fair crown
That cost him many a toothache. Heaven forbid
That I should doubt all kinds of miracles
Come naturally to a dragon born,
For else, indeed, what good were to be got
By being born a dragon? But alas,
Why did the dragon burn himself to death?
Had he but lived, he might have saved the child

And is indoctrinated by Dame Rhoda in the principles of Draconian Philosophy.

From parting with his gift before she knew
The incalculable value of it. Zounds!
Who was the whispering, wheedling, white-coat knave
That from our daughter coax'd her crown away?"
A doubtful character.
"Ah, son," sigh'd Rhoda, "if I did but know!
'Tis this that troubles me. The face was hid,
The head white-hooded. I beheld no more."
"Could'st thou not from the feathers tell the bird?
The King said. "Some outlandish popinjay,
Most likely! Did'st thou in his aspect note
No mark whereby to know the man again
If thou should'st meet him?" Rhoda shook her head.
"The stranger was no man," she groan'd. "No man?"
The King gasp'd. "Ah, I never thought of that!
Let me reflect. No man, no son-in-law;
No son-in-law, no new alliance gain'd;
No heirs, no anything! What sort of age?"
"Even younger than our dear one to my sight,
But to my thought much older," she replied.

Whose conduct gives rise to various conjectures.

"It was a Russian Princess!" said the King.
"No," said the Dame, "'twas nothing of the kind."
"White-hooded?" he went on. "It must have been
An Abbess, then. Provision shall be made,
In case of a minority, to guard
The Crown against encroachment by the Church."
Dame Rhoda wrung her apron to a rope
Between her skinny hands, and clutch'd it tight.
"It was no Abess," she exclaim'd. "Alas,
It was not even a woman!" "Then," cried he,
"Why did'st thou say it was no man?" "Because
No man it was," she sigh'd. "The nondescript
Was neither man nor woman." From his pipe
The King shook out the ashes, slowly rose,
Paced the floor silent, hands behind him clasp't,
Head bent, and brows in deep reflection knit,
Then, coming to a sudden halt, he said,
"Dame, if thou hadst but told me this before,
I could have guess'd it sooner—clear as day!

Comments, in the Imperative Mood, on irregular declensions of the Epicene Gender.

It was a Knight of Malta! I'll forbid
Knights of that Order access to our realm,
And nobody shall be allow'd to wear
A Maltese cross at our Court Balls. A law
Forthwith I'll make, and such a law! . . . . But
'faith,
The worst of legislation, as I've found,

The practical difficulties of legislation examined

Is that no sooner one good law is made
Than half-a-dozen others are required
To undo all the mischief it has done.
Until at last a law is like a door
Provided with so many bolts and bars
That the thief finds it far less difficult
To get in by the window. That you'll see,
If this intriguer be, as you suppose,
Neither a man nor woman. Such a case
No law has yet foreseen. A law express
To meet it must immediately be made,
Prohibiting attempts upon the Crown

To everybody and to nobody.

And that's a law that's something like a law,

Or else I know not what a law is like,

Who have been signing laws my whole life long!

Ah, Rhoda, Rhoda, not even conjuring

Is harder than the art of government!

And, dear, O dear, what cleverness it needs

To keep the country tolerably safe

From all the clever folks in it! Dame, Dame!

When I reflect that yon poor cradled babe

Will some day have to govern, and I gone,

That hers 'twill be to suffer in my stead

The thousand headaches that crown'd heads endure,

Sit without snoring at the Council Board,

Sign laws that nobody can understand,

And listen without yawning in his face

To my long-winded Lord High Chancellor,

I almost wish that they may have their will

And do their worst, those coffee-marks of thine,

In reference to the administrative functions of the Crown.

Requiescat!

Letting the child sleep crownless, careless, saved
From the sad toilful trouble of it all,
Somewhere among the flowers, far far away!"

Seen in its true aspect, the relation between Tradition and Monarchy is beautiful.

While thus in wandering babble, vague, grotesque,
And inconsecutive as changeful dreams,
The old King half-soliloquized aloud,
Dame Rhoda's face beam'd fervid, beautiful
With a strange beauty not of flesh and blood.
It was the mystic beauty that is born
Of motherhood. Age leaves it undeform'd,
Allurement to uncomeliness it gives,
Bathes in enchanting light the homeliest head
When o'er her babe the happy mother bends,
Revives in fresh virginities of joy
After time's wearying years have done their worst,
Brightens the dim eye, sweetens the sour'd lip,
And blooms unwither'd in the care-worn cheek
When tremulous eld with blushing pride receives,

Childlike itself, the grown-up child's embrace.
At last she murmur'd, "What would Pilgram say?"
The King's face brighten'd. "Pilgram? Ah, well
thought!"
He answer'd. "And methinks that here again,
Dear Rhoda, from his visit to the Court
Of that wild Cousin of ours, Cophetua,
The Master was this evening to return.
Ye two are my good angels. It is thou
That warnest, he that guideth." From its peg
Forthwith his crown he hastily unhook'd
With eager hand, and, as he grasp'd it, groan'd,
"A Knight of Malta! after all the pains
That Her Late Majesty, our sainted spouse,
Took to prolong the dynasty! Farewell!"

Dame Rhoda makes a suggestion.

Softly the door behind the old King closed,
Scarce heeded by Dame Rhoda, who had turn'd
To rearrange her conjuring cards; and soon

On which the King acts.

Along the silence of the floors beyond
The last sound of his slipper'd footstep ceased,
While, still perusing kings and queens and knaves,
The sorceress mutter'd, "Diamonds or Hearts?"

Why, what a King is this!—HORATIO.

III.

THE MASTER.

A biographical puzzle.

To all the Court of Diadum well known
Was Master Pilgram, tho' by none known well.
Most unobtrusive, yet a busy cause
Of garrulous conjecture, both the man
Himself, and his relations with the King.
A man of inconspicuous aspect—garb
No rank denoting, face and form no age
Distinctly mark'd, nor aught exceptional
About him, save perchance a mirthful eye,
Unnoticeably watchful of mankind.
But they who felt that eye upon them, found
A lurking mystery in its merriment,

A something cavernous and full of depths
Wherein men's thoughts might wander and be lost.
Was he of foreign birth, or native born?
For both he seem'd, and yet not either quite.
Had he another name, another home,
Acknowledged only in some other land?
Or was it here at home that his true name,
From other lands returning, he avow'd?
For neither here nor elsewhere stay'd he long,
Yet, after his departure, never here
Of his arrival elsewhere news was heard.
Free from all ceremonial to the Court
He came as one that uninvited comes,
Secure of welcome, to a kinsman's hearth;
And rather as an inmate than a guest
He went, unbidden. Whither? No one knew,
Nor whence he came. An unsolved problem he,
Like Gaspar Hauser, or the Iron Mask:
For all the Nestors or the Court averr'd

That there they knew him when they still were boys,
Before His Majesty the present King
Succeeded to the sceptre of his sire.
And, tho' nigh threescore years must have elapsed
Since Pilgram, now the son's familiar friend,
Was then the father's, yet they all agreed
That no whit older now than then he seem'd,
Who neither then nor now seemed old or young.

The Wooden Horse of Diadum.

And in those days he made the little Prince
A pretty horse; a hobby-horse of wood,
But cleverer far than any common horse
Of flesh and blood. This horse could gallop, trot,
Pace, amble, canter, jump, and make the volt,
The demivolt, the virevolt, the passade
And repassade, the repollon, courbette,
And falcade. And not only all these tricks
The wooden horse could perfectly perform,
But he perform'd them to appropriate strains

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Of pleasing military music, play'd
In his own belly. Later, when the crown
Of his departed sire the Prince assumed,
His first act was to publish a decree
Proclaiming that the tune of *Old King Cole*,
To which his hobby gallop'd, was henceforth
The royal anthem. He at the same time
Forbade that revolutionary air
Of *Cherry Ripe*. This wise precaution saved
The country from incalculable ills.
But Diadummiania's Wooden Horse,
Unlike its treacherous Trojan prototype,
Rescued, instead of ruining, the walls
That lodged it. For one night, when Diadum
Was fast asleep, a sudden chime of bells
Rang curfew from the belly of the Horse,
And roused the sleepers just in time to see
That portion of the palace was on fire,
Wherein His Royal Highness the Crown Prince,

Its chief exploit as beneficent as that of the Wooden Horse of Troy was the reverse.

And all his gentlemen in waiting, slept.
The Master of the Ceremonies then
Immediately got printed, and sent round,
The proper invitation-cards to all
The Privy Councillors and Chamberlains,
The foreign Envoys and Ambassadors,
And those distinguish'd strangers who had been
Presented at the Court of Diadum,
To attend the Conflagration. Gentlemen
Without their collars—*undress uniform*
Ladies without their trains—*demi-toilette.*
All who received His Majesty's commands
To be in waiting at the Burning-Down
Were to be saved in order of Court Rank:
The Diplomatic Body first, and then
The Hereditary Mistress of the Robes
And the Grand Marshal; after these, in turn,
The Privy Councillors and Chamberlains,
Each Chamberlain according to the date

A great Court Ceremony.

Order of Official Precedence.

Of his appointment, and the rules prescribed
For such Court ceremonies by the code
Of Diadummianian Etiquette.

Disappearance of the Wooden Horse.

The Royal Family and all the Court,
Thanks to the Wooden Horse, were thus preserved,
But the poor Wooden Horse himself was burnt.
He to his fate with dignity succumb'd;
And 'twas a touching spectacle to see
That noble animal performing all
His volts and demivolts and repollons
Among the roaring flames, wherein at last
He perish'd to the tune of *Old King Cole.*

The surviving legend.

In Diadum, however, a belief
Prevail'd that nothing did, or could, destroy
Pilgram's imperishable palfrey. Folks
There were, who deem'd this horse would reappear,
As it had disappear'd, in some strange way
When least expected; just as boors in France

Believe the first Napoleon still alive,
And in a British dungeon. Not a few
Had grandmothers accustom'd to relate
That they were girls the night of that great fire,
And that they well remember'd having seen
Distinctly thro' its flame and smoke the form
Of Master Pilgram. He was sauntering slow
Along the bright edge of a burning beam,
And whistling *Old King Cole.* The palfrey neigh'd,
And, trotting to him, nosed his pocket. He
A lump of sugar from that pocket drew,
Gave it the nag, its neck and nose caress'd,
Lengthen'd the stirrup-leathers (for this steed
Stood always ready-saddled in its stall)
And mounted leisurely, with graceful bows
Saluting the assembled crowds below.
Then, as the last red rafter tumbled in,
Both horse and rider rose up into heaven,
Majestic, musical, magnificent,

Among the rising sparks, and reach'd the stars.
There still distinguishable for a while
Was Master Pilgram. Up the Zodiac
He canter'd at his customary pace,
Chatted with Sagittarius on the road,
And then alighted at the Golden Ram,
A well-known tavern on the Milky Way,
Whose barmaid was Astræa. Forth she came,
A fresh-brew'd foaming flagon in her hand,
To welcome Master Pilgram. But meanwhile
Leda's twin boys, incorrigible brats
Brimful of mischief, playing on the path,
Let off a comet. That celestial squib
Frighten'd the Wooden Horse, and fast away
He gallop'd down the Ecliptic. Pilgram tried
To catch him by the tail, but in mistake

This story is improbable. There is no mention of the alleged circumstances in Dr. Kepler's Report of 1613 to the Diet of Ratisbon. Kepler's silence about them is most significant; for it is unlikely that any serious disturbance of the Zodiac should have escaped the notice of an astronomer who may be said to have passed his life among the stars. Consult the Kepler MSS. in the Imperial Academy of Sciences at St. Petersburg. It will also be observed that the extraordinary distance here attributed to the motions of Master Pilgram's body is represented as having greatly increased their general attractiveness. This would seem to be incompatible with the law established by Newton, that the attractive property of bodies is diminished in proportion to the squares of their distances. The event, however, might have happened before Newton's time, and consequently previous to the establishment of that law.

It was the comet's tail he caught, and swift
Both Pilgram and the comet disappear'd.
Since then, for many and many a year, no more
Of Pilgram or his palfry had been seen
In Diadummiania. Men said,
"What wonder? Nobody, once gone so far,
Comes back so soon. Such journeys are not made
In four-and-twenty hours." As time went by,
However, when the sexton's spade had stopp'd
The mouth of each eye-witness with a pinch
Of graveyard dust, the occurrence of these facts
Some persons openly denied. But then,
They were not present when the facts occurr'd,
And that makes a great difference. Prudent folks,
Content with the innocuous privilege
Of private doubt, due public deference paid
To the tradition of the Flying Horse;
Knowing that they no truer story knew,
To substitute for its surmised untruth,

Growth of Scepticism.

Recognized imprudence of disturbing established beliefs.

And feeling that society itself
Is but a well-dress'd fiction. Science sought
To reconcile the rumour'd miracle
With natural causes, by explaining how
Mere heat might naturally move the springs
Of an automaton, mere natural smoke
Assume the semblance of a horse in heaven.
But, getting not a "Thank-you" for attempts
At thus reducing everything to smoke,
Science herself, on second thoughts, dismiss'd
The smoke-hypothesis, with all the rest,
As quite unscientific. This confirm'd
The popular belief in the event
As a true miracle; since Science fail'd
To prove it possible by any means
That were not obviously miraculous.
The wisest Diadummianians held
That in a certain sense the tale was true,

First attempts at a scientific treatment of the subject-matter of traditional belief.

Final attitude of Science.

Its effect upon the general body of opinion; to which it leaves no alternative between unreserved denial of the recorded phenomena, and unreserved acquiescence in the original explanation of them.

Tho' in a certain other sense 'twas false.
The facts alleged were unbelievable,
But what of that? Those facts had been believed,
Were still believed, by multitudes of men
Whom there was every reason to believe
Sincere believers in their own belief.
That this belief existed was a fact,
Proving the facts believed to have at least
Believable existence—not indeed
In Natural History, that rejected them
As neither natural nor historical,
But in the History of the Human Mind,
That recognised them and explain'd them all
As well-attested actual results
Of the mind's human character. Dislike
Of negative bare ignorance sufficed
To endear the story to the common crowd;
And thoughtful minds found much in it to praise.
The tale was pretty, elevating too;

Belief and Scepticism reconciled by the Historical Method.

The ethical and æsthetical sides of the question.

For to the stars it lifted up men's hearts,
And show'd them there bright images, beyond
Disaster and destruction here on earth.
Thus, Philosophical Sagacity
With popular Simplicity combined
To keep the story of the Flying Horse
Respected, save by those who were themselves
Persons of no respectability.
But of its most convinced believers each
Believed it in a somewhat different way;
Variations. And thus, not only did as many tales
Concerning Master Pilgram go about
In Diadummiania as mouths
There were to tell them, or as ears to hear,
But also of the meaning of those tales,
Their cause and character and origin,
There were as many theories afoot
As fashions in Philosophy there be.

Such was the man, and such the counsellor,
King Diadummianus, when he left
Dame Rhoda, sought, and in his chamber found.
The Master, with a pencil in one hand,
A palette in the other, musing stood
Before a canvas he had vaguely stain'd
With streaks and spots of colour that composed
No picture—or, if any, such alone
As those that sometimes on a winter night
Among the husht hearth's embers half abuse
A sick man's fancy ere he falls asleep.
But when the King (save by his own remarks
Uninterrupted) reach'd his story's end,
Prodigious was his wonder to behold
On Pilgram's canvas all the tale portray'd,
He had been pouring into Pilgram's ear.
Those streaks and spots, by unperceived degrees,
Were grown beneath the Master's hovering hand
Into a picture of Dame Rhoda's dream.

Calm in her guarded cavern slept the child;
The sleepless Dragon by the sleeper crouch'd,
And glorious in the darkness glow'd the crown.
Anon, the pencil o'er the picture swept,
And all its outlines, fading fast, relapsed
Into mere unintelligible tints.
"Stay!" cried the King. "Ah, why so soon dissolved
Thy picture, like the vision it recall'd,
Just at the moment when they both began
To awaken curiosity?" "Because,"
The Master answer'd, "both were prophecies
Of perils that perchance may ne'er assume
Distincter aspect." Then did he unfold
A plan by his ingenious wits devised
To counteract those perils. Hugely pleased,
The King together rubb'd his palms and cried,
"*Ça ira!*" When, moreover, the next day
His Council was engaged in drafting laws
On lunacy, the King continued still

Pilgram confides his project to the King.

Strange behaviour of His Majesty.

Rubbing his hands, and chuckling to himself
"*Ça ira!*" As they left the Council Board,
The Ministers of one another ask'd,
"What was the matter with His Majesty?
The King to-day was quite unlike himself;
Can there be something in his mind? From whom
Could he have caught that odd outlandish oath,
Ça ira?" "From a lunatic, no doubt!"
The Chancellor said grimly. Those two words,
Ça ira (which were gibberish, in fact,
Invented by the King in such a mood
As makes fond mothers mumble to their babes
All kinds of merry nonsense) by and by
The round of Custom ran till they became
A popular expression. First of all,
Like other fooleries, they had their vogue
In upper circles, and were Shibboleths
Of fashionable intercourse awhile;
But after the Fine World had worn them out,

A curious philological detail.

The Common People used them, to imply
A foolish sort of self-complacency.
This is the unsuspected origin
Of that famed phrase, *Ça ira:* and it shows
That revolution-mongers, even in France,
Talk nonsense sometimes without knowing it.

The King's excursion

'Twas in the full-grown blossom of the year,
And day was dawning over Diadum,
When forth the King with Master Pilgram stole.
Unwitness'd thro' the silent town they went,
And past its seaward suburbs, till they reach'd
A grassy path by bramble roses paved
With fallen petals. It was known to none
Save Pilgram, and its first discoverer rash;
A little rillet of hill-water sweet
That down it with a child's impatience ran
To taste the bitter salt of the great sea.
Here, under hiding boughs, by hedges green,

Off the beaten track.

Till grass and moss and flower gave way to sand
And shell and shingle, the companions pass'd
Out on the sudden beach of a small bay
That from the overhanging cliffs above
Look'd inaccessible. There, Pilgram loosed
The rope that tether'd to a tiny creek
A slender pinnace. Quick the King and he
Into the pinnace stept, and push'd from shore.
Safely her course their little vessel held
Across a treacherous sea thick sown with reefs
And sunken rocks. From the high downs above
Shepherds this embarcation wondering watch'd.
Never before had fisher moor'd his skiff
In that lone bay, nor ever pilot steer'd
His bark unbroken o'er those sunken rocks,
Whither the pinnace speeded fast. For there
A shoreless, steep, surf-beaten island rose,
About whose barren crags and perilous creek
No living thing found shelter, tho' it stood

His Majesty goes a-fishing

In troubled waters.

Nearness of the Unknown.

Scarce farther from the mainland than perchance
A bolt might reach when thro' barbarian seas
The Balearic pirate chased some bark
For Carthage bound. And on the seaman's chart
That unapproachable island's evil name
Was *Isle Forevermore-be-lost-to-sight.*

What was said of the King's sport by those who looked down on it.

The shepherds recognized His Majesty
And Master Pilgram. And they shook their heads,
Saying, "A fisherman's a fisherman,
A fish a fish. A king should be a king.
The fisherman, to gain his livelihood,
Must daily go to sea and risk his life.
The king, who hath no livelihood to gain,
Can daily stay at home without a risk,
And comfortably dine upon the fish
The fisherman hath risk'd his life to catch.
But no! Great folks, not satisfied forsooth
To eat, when they can have it without pains,
The meat that poor folks take such pains to get,

Must needs, because there is no need at all,
Make show with rod and line or dog and gun
Of catching it and killing it themselves.
And all that needless trouble they call sport."
Thus to each other did those shepherds speak,
As sages do, whenever sages deign
To speak of follies that are not their own.
But back at moonrise Pilgram and the King
Came safely, bringing with them, still alive,
A monstrous lobster that His Majesty
Had deign'd to catch. Within the palace-porch
The two friends parted, and the King regain'd
The Royal Nursery. Its Baby Queen
Was sleeping. By her side Dame Rhoda watch'd.
The grey-hair'd father to the cradle crept
Softly, and bent above it. When he rose,
A trembling gem of purest water gleam'd
Upon the forehead of the child. Anon
The monarch at the moonlit casement stood,

The King has something to show for his trouble.

Father and child.—

Musing. Between the palace and the sea
The royal city adown the hillside humm'd
With human mutterings multitudinous,
And twinkled with innumerable lamps.
Beyond it, like a battlement, uprose
The dark broad sea; and the large moon let down
Over that battlement a ladder of light
For wishes to climb heavenward, or perchance
For earthward-faring angels to descend.
"Pilgram," the old man murmur'd as he mused,
"I would that I might sleep and dream unwaked
Till dawns the destin'd hour of thy return!"

Good night, sweet Prince! —HORATIO.

IV.

THE ISLAND.

PILGRAM upon the morrow from the Court
Departed, and with him July ; nor back,
Until July was come again, came he.
But all the months between, while far away
They deem'd him, close at hand the Master dwelt
In that wild island to whose shore morose
His sorcery safe across the perilous straits
Had piloted the King. There, all unseen,
A troop he landed of white-turban'd folk
With dusky faces ; cunning artisans,
Masons and carpenters, expert as those
Who came on floats to Joppa from afar,

Pilgram in partibus.

Builders from afar.

And builded Bathshua's mysterious son
A house of glory for his sacred feasts,
His solemn sabbaths, and his glad new moons.
The better side.
At midnight underneath a moonless sky
These strangers, led by Pilgram, disembark'd
Where, in a hidden bight, the savage coast
Changed, as a Sea-Hag in her secret cave
To a young Siren changes, and disclosed;
Voluptuously loose from all restraint,
Soft undulating slopes and dimpled nests
Of naked loveliness. For, like the moon,
That never yet to mortal eyes reveal'd
That unimaginable hemisphere
She turns from earth, the self-secluding isle,
Seen from the mainland, not a glimpse vouchsafed
Of its evasive witcheries. But here,
Wall'd from the rancorous North and warping East
By spacious solitudes of mountain snow,
One glowing inlet to the warm South-West

Lay open, husht in whose luxuriant lap
A land of unsuspected beauty smiled.
Thick-heap'd about it gleaming gorges hung
Purpureal woods, that droop'd beneath their load
Of leafage by a windless heaven unheaved,
And loose from branch to branch along them roam'd
The labyrinthine rose. Its meadowy dales
A thousand fragrant suspirations fill'd
With incense breathing from the blossom-dust
Dropt by a thousand summers in a soil
Of germinating spices. The light down
Of feathery seeds, the flash of insect wings,
The thin ethereal shapes of hovering shade
That over luminous uplands track'd the course
Of clouds and great wild birds, were all day long
Sole travellers of the indolent solitude:
And not a sound its fervid stillness search'd
Save the low murmuring bee's long mellow hum,
Or, phantom-echo'd from afar, the shout

A virgin soil.

Of waters falling into shadowy glens.

The beginning of a Ballad.

Light task it was in this delicious land,
Where Nature laughing led the steps of Art,
For Master Pilgram's well-equipp'd adepts
(Shaping to their fantastical design
The tassel'd precipices from whose tops
Long trailers of rich-hued convolvolus stream'd,
Enwoven with twining bryony) to uprear
A fabric fair as any elfin bower
That hides some happy secret from the world.
Fair as an elfin bower they built it high
Among the lonely hills, and hard to find
As that sleep-haunted palace, overgrown
With bramble-blooms ; where, lull'd (so legends tell)
In slumber pure, a maiden princess dreams
Of promised happiness, nor, dreaming, knows
That dreams of promised happiness, alas,
Are happier far than happiness itself.
A coil of glittering cliffs, that seaward shone

In the clear azure ripple of a still bay
Reflected, branching inland brokenly,
And there asunder scoop'd by the prone stress
Of a precipitous stream, on either side
The river'd glen, like giant gateways, rear'd
Steep crags abrupt that, slanting as they rose
Towards each other, strove to reunite,
And almost touch'd at the top. Here Pilgram camp'd
About the brambly boulders of the gorge,
Skirting its torrent's stony tract, his troops
Of wizard craftsmen. Here their water-wheels,
Shrouded in veils of rainbow'd mist, revolved
Laborious, here their forges flamed, and here
Their ladder'd scaffolds swarm'd, as high in heaven,
From the rough mountain ridge hewn mountainous,
A towery pile these mystic masons wrought:
A pile whose glimmering battlements appear'd
Half cloud, half crag; and, tho' but freshly built
All indistinguishable from the grey

The Imagination creates not. It does but transform the materials furnished by Nature for the manifestation of its force; imparting to them new aspects, a new significance, and new relation to the human world.

Old parent rock's self, cloth'd in the wan hues
Of distance, and the mystery of the hills;
Like some ancestral portrait of a child
With infant features in a garb antique.
For now the old time was young; and, as in bud
White tho' unwither'd is the hawthorn's head,
So here did youth and age one aspect wear,
Blent in the hoary blossom of the past.

Gardens and bowers between the winding walls
Of that aërial labyrinth hidden, or hung
On terraced platforms purpling golden heights,
They planted; and the wandering water-springs
And courses channell'd into shadowy wells.
Reachless upon the seaward side of them
Were both the palace and the crags it crown'd;
But inland, down by wooded slopes unseen,
The dim meanderings of a sylvan path
Led softly from the summit to the glen.

A twelve month's task this wondrous work had been
To Pilgram's ministrant adepts; and now
The pile was perfect, and they all were gone,
By night embarking, back to their own lands.
Yet still, alone, he linger'd in the isle,
Still roam'd, companionless, from room to room
The wild fantastic palace he had built,
And haunted still its blossomy terraces,
Returning ever to what seem'd the mouth
Of some huge well-shaft in the central court.
A monstrous cavity it was, that gaped
Into a gulf of gloom unfathomable,
Girt by a marble parapet, beneath
A penthouse roof with signs zodiacal
Emblazon'd, on twelve porphyry columns propp'd,
Each column carven rough with shapes grotesque
Of beast, and bird, and blossom. Here longwhile
Was Pilgram busied, with ingenious hand
Adjusting pulleys, winches, levers, wheels,

The productions of Phantasos would remain unknown and profitless, were he not Craftsman as well as Seer, and in both capacities master of all arts. But the service of the higher faculties employed by him in the rough-shaping of his work is not required for the finishing touches which render that work accessible to those for whose benefit it is destined; these last being mainly mechanical.

And cordage. Would ye know the reason why?
Come, then, whoever fears not to pursue,
Where'er they lead, the footsteps of a guide
Whose ways are variable as the winds,
And never long upon the beaten track!
Come to the sleeping-chamber of the King
By Pilgram loved! A King whose countenance,
Discourse, and conduct, all alike inspire
Complete conviction that his honest throne
He never could have owed to any cause
Less irreproachable than being born
The only heir to it. But haste! for Time,
That unreturning traveller, hurries on,
Soon leaving far behind him out of reach
Old kings, old kingdoms, and old kingliness.
King Diadummianus is the last
Of all his dynasty, and nevermore
May modern verse his royal rest invade.

The last of the Ballad Kings.

The King's dream.

It was the hour when, nodding on his watch,
The startled sentinel hears the vigilant cry
That shamed repentant Peter. Night wax'd pale,
And still the monarch slept. Yet slept he not
Ungarmented on his accustom'd couch,
But full-dress'd, sitting in the regal chair
Where sleep had slid upon him. Round about,
The candles, to their silver sockets sunk,
With sooty wicks untrimm'd, and long white beards
Of wandering wax, burn'd wan. The old King dream'd
That he was going to a Gala Ball,
Given by His Majesty King Solomon
To meet the Queen of Sheba and the Kings
Of Garamant and Nasamonia.
He had bespoken for this great event
A new court-suit, and it surprised him much
To find that monstrous lobster, he had caught
And supp'd upon twelve months ago, was turn'd
Into his tailor. The smooth garden-sward

The coat is cut according to the cloth.

This creature with its nippers snipp'd like cloth.
"Ho, thou crustaceous rascal!" roar'd the King,
"Who bade thee spoil our palace-lawn, to make
A court-suit fitter for field mice and moles
Than monarchs? Would'st thou ruin utterly
Our credit with our cousin Solomon?
That Prince of Jews, were we so ill endorsed,
Would certainly dishonour us, and we
(Dread thought!) might have no friend in Jewry left."
"Fear nothing, Sire!" The lobster-tailor laugh'd.
"This stuff is velvet-smooth, of finest nap,
True Elbœuf texture, all pure bottle-green.
Deign, Sire, to stretch apart thy royal legs,
That I may measure to a nicety
The sinus of the crural angle. Thanks!
Alas, since that mischance which brought to shame
His Rhodian Royal Highness—my revered
Old client, the Colossus, whose court-tights
Crack'd at an angle of four-score degrees

A disputed endorsement.

And ten—one cannot be too careful. *Hic*
Rhodus, hic salta!" With malignant smile,
As thus he spake, the mocking monster slid
Insidiously, between the royal legs,
His back perfidious and impervious, horsed
The monarch on it, and full-speed began
A backward march down hill precipitous
To where the plunging billow bruised the beach.
What might have happen'd to His Majesty
Not even he who tells this tale can guess,
If old Dame Rhoda, who was looking out
From Pilgram's casement, had not chanced to spy
Her Sovereign's peril. Pilgram's inkstand stood,
A quiver full of pens, upon his desk.
Pens, penknife, inkstand, all, Dame Rhoda seized,
And hurl'd them at that treacherous lobster's head.
No sooner did the inkstand find itself
Launch'd into space (its natural element)
Than it became a great black crow. The pens

The dish runs away with the spoon.

An inkstand takes flight.

Spread out their feather'd crow-quills, and were wings.
The pointed penknife was the bird's keen beak;
Wherewith it dealt the lobster such a stab
As slew that monster indigestible;
Who, muttering "Malediction! Mayonaise!
And Tartar Sauce!" expired. "Quick!" croak'd the crow,
"Sire, art thou ready? There's no time to lose."
Forthwith, upon the sable bird astride,
The King beheld his Kingdom fade, and heard
The crow-quills round him talking to themselves.
"What will become of us?" they ask'd. "No good,"
Replied the penknife. "You inquisitive quills,
Forever asking questions, why such haste
To get you know not where? Of this be sure!
When steel and pen are into contact come,
Things must return to what they were before
By a short cut. And it is thus alone
The King can to his Kingdom be restored."

And carries away the Monarchy:

Which, after being made the subject of animated debate,

"Pooh!" said a pen, "the King must first consent
To be a piece of paper." "Small the chance
Of such consent!" the penknife cried. "Pert pen,
What king would ever of his own accord
Become a charter?" "That's a prejudice,"
The pen retorted. "I know how to slip
A little sentence in, that shall reduce
The whole to nothing." "What will it contain?"
Enquired the penknife. And the pen replied,
"A simple formula. The Royal Oath.
His Majesty anon must condescend
To swear it by the father of his sires,
The founder of his dynasty, whose name
Is known to none, not even to himself:
But I, who may not tell it, know that name
Is graved on his ancestral sepulchre."
"Caw!" said the swarthy fowl, and swifter flapp'd
With her funereal pinion the void air,
"We seek that sepulchre." This dreadful talk

Of charters, and the sepulchres of kings,
And royal oaths, deplorably confused
His Diadummianian Majesty;
Who, in the increasing jumble of his dream
(A monarch's nightmare), vaguely felt himself
Changed by degrees into a plain white sheet
Of paper. On that sheet of paper white
The pen, that knew it, wrote the history
Of all his race from the remotest time;
And then, to illustrate those annals, drew
The mausoleum of his ancestor,
Capricius the Magnificent. But there,
By some misgiving seized (some sense perchance
Of secret fear by that great name inspired,
Even when 'twas only copied from a tomb)
The pen, till then so overweening, slipp'd,
And down fell an obliterating blot.
This slur upon his sepulchre displeased
The great dead Sovereign, who indignant rose,

Assumes a constitutional character.

An incomplete historical record.

And shook the doorjambs of his tomb. Up sprang
The startled dreamer, shuddering, and beheld,
Not the entomb'd forefather of his race,
But Pilgram, who, with torch in hand, exclaim'd,
"Sire, art thou ready? There's no time to lose."
"Why, that's what said thine inkstand," gasp'd the King,
Still half awake, "and then became a crow."
"Sire, from an inkstand," Master Pilgram sigh'd,
"Expect no reasonable speech. But come,
For all is finisht!" "Ah," the King replied,
"True to the destin'd hour dost thou return,
Nor ever hast thou fail'd thy promised word,
But O the long, long time without a sign!
Not that for even a moment of it all
Have I once doubted thee! To doubt thy truth,
Thy love, thy power, thy deep beneficence,
That would be death—the death of all things dear,
And fair, and sweet, the death of life's best life!
Lead on, then, trusted Master! Led by thee

The Author of this Drama appears upon the stage.

And is warmly welcomed.

My guide I know, nor fear the unknown path."
The Master stoop'd. A lingering hand he laid
Upon the old King's shoulder, father-like,
And answer'd, (it was all he answer'd him)
"Even so, dear child!" What was it, then, the bond
That thus to one another bound these two
As child to father—this old homely King,
So hoary-headed yet so young at heart,
Nor all unwise in his simplicity,
And that mysterious guardian of the hopes
Of all his house? It was the bond, vouchsafed
To every unsophisticated soul,
Of human intercourse with one humane
Tho' wonder-working god, who in disguise
Still haunts this earth, and still with men consorts;
Perplexing those that recognise him not,
But helping all who in his power confide.
A god whose patient goodness unfatigued
Forsakes not even frivolity: a god

Pilgrim is discovered to be an old acquaintance.

After the departure of the gods (*vide* Legend) one remained: and still he haunts this earth, though in disguise. Rather

Whose presence gives a charm to things grotesque,
A grace to things ungainly, and imparts
To common things a mystery from afar,
To things mysterious a familiar tone
That turns even terror to delight: a god
Whose unacknowledged influence all creeds
Have cause to cherish, for his smile makes fair
The rudest fanes, and sweet the harshest faiths,
And tender the austerest rites, and glad
The gloomiest mythologies of man,
Whose mind mistrusts the little that he knows,
And fears the much he knows not. Thou thyself,
Brother or Sister, hast thou never felt,
In doubt, discouragement, and lassitude,
Thy spirit guided by a hidden hand

than relinquish the amusement of intercourse with mankind, this capricious Deity hath accommodated his character to the conditions of every religion. His fellow Deities called him Phantasos: Dame Rhoda christened him Pilgram; he hath many another name. For he travels through the ages, taking here and there the name of this man or of that, as princes take the names of their subjects when they go abroad. And, although by his works only shall you know him, yet he leaveth to others the glory or the shame of them. He it is who taught the Sirens the songs they sang to Ulysses, and made Mercutio acquainted with Queen Mab. Led by him, Alexander invaded the East, and Columbus discovered the West. He was the first Free Mason, the architect of Solomon's Temple, and hath left the trace of his handiwork among the shrines of Christendom, and the minarets of Islam. The Playhouse was once his favourite resort. Now he is oftener to be found in the Madhouse. Sometimes graceful, sometimes grotesque, at one while sublime, at another absurd, his form is never twice the same. Many are mystified by his antics, and exasperated by his whims. But to all who recognise its divinity, his presence imparts freedom and joy.

Far from the close yet unfamiliar crowd
To lonely places sweet as home regain'd
After long homesick exile,—wild sea shores,
Deep forest glens, or visionary hills?
There, to the vocal silence listening rapt,
Hast thou not heard a voice that with thy soul
Spake clearly, and gone comforted away?
'Tis Pilgram's hand that drew thee: Pilgram's voice
That hail'd thee: Pilgram's presence that reveal'd
In those rare moments memorable proofs
Of the mistrusted immortality
Of his own godhood. It is Pilgram's self
That, when thy hope is low, thy heart oppress'd,
And on it heavily weighs this weary world,
Doth loosen life's intolerable load,
And lift thee as a father his sick child.

Pilgram's lodging in the palace of Diadum, and its furniture.

The King his guide had follow'd, and they stood

Within the Master's chamber. Cramm'd it was
With quaint contrivances of curious art:
Porcelain pagodas, on whose mimic shrines
A puppet Bonze burn'd incense: tuneful clocks
Cluster'd with orbs that, turning, told the time:
Chess-boards whose ivory-carven chivalry
Battled unbidden, fierce as Norman Knights:
Small silver bells, set ringing in a row
By sparks of fluid fire: fantastic founts
That, spouting perfumes, spun and poised a swarm
Of tiny balls, like Indian jugglers: birds
With jewell'd bosoms and mechanic wings,
That soar'd like larks and sang like nightingales:
And companies of dancing dolls, that duck'd
And curtsied quite as cleverly as lords
And ladies who have pass'd their lives at Court.
A trapdoor, touch'd by Pilgram in the floor,
Falling, reveal'd steep flinty stairs that curl'd
Down to a subterranean gallery, dark

The secret path,

and wonders by the way.

And still as the sepulchral chrysalis
Whence the tranced worm emerges a wing'd moth.
Below the base of the laborious sea
And through the secret stithies and ribb'd cells
Where Nature's hidden toil strange treasure stores
Up from this low world's many-footed life
That undiscoverable gallery led
To light ethereal and a land divine.
Along its darkness, guided by the glare
Of Pilgram's smoky torch, the King and he
Reach'd a vast cavern, crystal-crusted all
By hands not human, when the dædal orb
Of earth was still unfinisht. All around,
Into the rocky walls fast riveted,
Or hanging from the hollow cupola,
Branch'd clusters of colossal cressets. These
The Master kindled ; and forthwith to light
Leapt all the splendid crystals of the cave,
In flashing jets of jewel-colour'd flame ;

Emerald, ruby, sapphire, diamond, each
Swift response to the other's signal fires
In rival hues returning. The King gazed
With dazzled eyes on that wild revelry
Of radiances, and Pilgram murmur'd, "Yes!
These are the frozen tears of Earth's remorse
For a too-late repented wrong. They glow
Responsive only to a god's regard;
But from the gaze of that offended god
Earth hides them, knowing that he still resents
Her blind rejection of his mother's prayer.
She was great Saturn's daughter, and her name
Latona. Flying from her serpent-foe,
The pregnant goddess in her pangs appeal'd
To Earth for refuge, but appeal'd in vain.
Delos, the gift of Ocean, not of Earth,
Was the god's birthplace, Zeus his sire, and him
Men call'd Apollo. Friends were we: and here
On earth he, too, in human garb disguised,

Pilgram explains things in his own way.

Which is the round-about

way of a story-teller.

The homes of men once haunted, shepherding
Herds for Admetus in the days of old.
Earth for the loss of him these tears hath wept,
Rubies, and emeralds, and diamonds;
And 'tis to lure him back she turns to heaven
Those starry eyes of hers that men call flowers,
With looks that kindle in the rose, and droop
Dim with love-languors in the violet.
But he forgives not, and her tears she hides:
Down from the roses in her bosom drop
Rubies, and from the lilies diamonds, down
Drop sapphires from the violets, and from all
Her other eyes, whose leafèd lids young Spring,
Sighing, breathes open, the green emeralds come."
Thus murmur'd Pilgram; and the sea, that roll'd
Its restless waters o'er that cavern's roof,
Mingled low moanings with his murmur'd words.

And the King understands.

"Pilgram," the King said timidly, "I know
That I shall never, never understand

The things thou speakest of. To thee, indeed,
Are all things known, and I am ignorant.
But yet to hear thee is my happiness;
And I believe thee, tho' I know full well
Apollo, whom thou bid'st me deem thy friend,
Is but a statue which the gardeners place
In gardens to look pretty. What of that?
I know not even how the sun contrives
To keep itself in heaven without a nail
To hang on. But I love to feel its rays;
And, if I could, I would not hear explain'd
The secret of its radiance and its warmth.
It is so pleasant and so full of peace
To feel, as I do when I have thee near,
Perfectly happy, with a happiness
Inexplicably natural, and free
From every care to know the reason why."
Pilgram smiled silently, and sign'd the King
To follow. The two friends their march resumed.

them in *his* way;

Which is short and easy;

The gallery ended in the mason'd base
Of a deep well-shaft, that was waterless.
Here hung a bucket, balanced on a cord.
This, Master Pilgram enter'd; placed the King
Beside him; press'd a spring; and up they rose
From darkness into twilight, and still up
From twilight into daylight, till at last
Out of that cavern in the central court
Of Pilgram's island-palace they emerged,
And from its flowery terraces beheld
The azure-bosom'd paradise beneath.
"O Pilgram, Pilgram!" cried the glad old King,
Half laughing and half weeping, "and 'tis here
That she will dwell? Shut from the unkind world,
Fresh as to-morrow in a lover's dream,
Safer than Summer in the buds unborn!
And this enchanting realm I owe to thee!"
Here utterance fail'd him, and with humid eyes
And open mouth, like a delighted child,

They enter the Happy Island.

And are glad.

He gazed around him, then on Pilgram's breast
Sank with a sudden inarticulate sob,
The grateful outburst of a joy surcharged.
And Master Pilgram, silent also, seem'd
Contented with no richer recompense
For all his twelvemonth's toil, than to behold
The childlike gladness of this grey old man.

To what issue will this come?—HORATIO.

V.

THE PRINCIPLE.

Pil-
gram's
Policy.

His sullen island's unapproachable
Lone Eden, the wild palace he had built
Among its sea-girt bowers, the secret way
Known to him only and the grateful King;
All these were part and parcel of the plan
Devised by Master Pilgram to avert
The fates foreshadow'd in Dame Rhoda's dream,
And save the Princess from the prophecy.
Unless, indeed, the prophecy had been,
To serve his purpose, by himself inspired;
As Opposition Orators predict
Public catastrophes their private plots

Are moving heaven and earth to bring about.
But Pilgram's crafty scheme to save the Crown
From coming perils, by removing thus
Its infant heiress from her royal home,
Had naught in common with the passive faith
Of fugitive princes. They from safe retreats
Serenely watch the growth from bad to worse
Of ills that trouble their relinquisht realms;
Hoping that multitudinous mistake,
The Revolution, in some final fit
Of folly may recall them to their thrones.
Pilgram, however, a distinction drew
Between a mousetrap and a monarchy.
A mouse can get with ease into the trap
That's baited for him by his greediness;
But a hard matter for the mouse it is,
Once in it, to get out. Just otherwise,
A king can from his kingdom get away,
If ill at ease there; but, once out of it,

Full hard he finds it to get in again.
That fact in natural history was well known
To Master Pilgram: and to counteract
Its indicated danger, he employ'd
A waxen puppet wonderfully made,
And by its author call'd 'THE PRINCIPLE.'
This puppet was a masterpiece of art,
Deceptively resembling to a hair
The Princess Diadema. No mere daub'd
And undeceiving mimicry of life,
Such as the bouncing showman's brazen trump
Bids gaping crowds about his booth admire;
But free from all defects of flesh and blood,
A faultless fiction that improved on truth.
Obedient to innumerable wheels
And pulleys in its little bust contain'd,
The Puppet Princess breathed and moved about
With such a natural grace, it rather seem'd
The ideal than the copy of that correct

The Principle of it.

Assemblage of complete accomplishments,
A well-brought-up young lady. Safe henceforth
The secret of the living Princess slept
In her well-made well-managed counterpart,
On one condition – Courtly Etiquette.
This at a salutary distance keeps
The curious crowd. And all in unison
With Courtly Etiquette was every line
And movement of the delicate machine
By Pilgram call'd 'THE PRINCIPLE.' "For, Sire,
The preservation of the State," said he,
"Depends upon the principle imposed
By state-craft on the popular belief.
Keep that unquestion'd, and the Crown is safe."
And, knowing that in all Progressive States
Principles must from time to time be changed,
Or rather say developed, he had made
Provision for each morphologic phase
Of his elastic doll's expanding form.

Which is both Conservative

And Progressive.

For its fine clockwork, when adroitly set,
Could to the size and shape of it impart
The appropriate appearances of growth;
From tenderest infancy to that sweet age
More tender still, that brings the blushing dawn
Of conscious beauty to the maiden's cheek.
This done, 'twas only needed to supply
The necessary quantity of heads
To suit the growing torse; and when the scale
Was properly adjusted, and the wheels
Wound up, the Pseudo-Princess would assume
Whatever age her maker pleased, from Six
To Sixteen. Neatly number'd One, Two, Three,
Et cætera, this Puppet of the State
Was furnish'd, like a scientific code,
With numerous headings. And the King's delight
Was in those waxen mirrors to admire
His daughter's future face—now pursed and arch
With playful childhood's mock importance, now

It contributes to the felicity of the monarchy.

A pensive maiden's with mysterious airs,
Demure as May's first bashful rose—while she,
The little living Princess, all the while
Lay looking at him with the wistful eyes
Wherethro' astonisht Infancy beholds
Its unaccustom'd earthly home, and smiles
On all alike, indifferently pleased
And puzzled by a poodle or a judge.
So Master Pilgram, in his private hours,
To please the monarch made that puppet fair
Change face more often than the fitful moon.
When in her seeming sixteenth summer moved
The mimic maiden, with paternal pride
The old King made his most majestic bow,
Sedately turning touch'd with courtly kiss
The waxen fingers, and in measured speech
His model heiress gallantly address'd;
Then, chuckling, o'er the cradle stoop'd, and cried,
"Come! See thy pretty self as thou shalt be,

But between Public Principle

My little Queen!" But when the child stretch'd out
Her tiny hands, and crow'd towards the form
Of her own future, all the father's heart
Was fill'd with fear. He caught her in his arms,
And murmur'd o'er her treasured head, "No! no!
Stay as thou art! For ever as thou art,
The darling of mine undetected joy!
Never become a coroneted doll,
With studied mien from hour to hour made up:
One set of graces for the Promenade,
Another for the Banquet-hall prepared,
These serious looks for the *Te Deum* learn'd,
And those becoming simpers for the ball!"
Such outbursts of a passion fresh and strong,
And unfamiliar to that monarch old
As her first love to some bewilder'd maid,
Left him abasht; and with embarrass'd smile
He said to Pilgram, "He that talks with babes
Must needs talk nonsense. Doth the Council wait?"

And Private Affection.

The King's mind is sometimes distracted.

Popularity of the Principle

With due publicity THE PRINCIPLE
Day after day, at regulated times,
Held by Dame Rhoda in a coach and six,
Was promenaded all about the town.
Later, the little puppet as it pass'd
Saluted gracefully with head and hand
Its loyal folk; who found the Princess grown,
And said, "How well Her Royal Highness looks!
So like already to the Queen deceased!"
The affair, however, was more difficult
When her sixth year the Princess had attain'd.
For then the establish'd custom of the Court
Prescribed that all the children of like age,
If born with more than thirty quarterings,
Should be invited upon certain days
Secured by reform of the *Ancien Régime*.
To play with the Crown Princess. In the name
Of Progress (that progressively deprives
Some one of something previously enjoy'd)
This custom Pilgram prudently suppress'd.

'Tis easy to deceive diplomatists,
For they, indeed, are train'd to be deceived ;
And what would be the use to some of them
Of their finessing, if it did not dupe
The deep credulity of all the rest ?
But children have a sense intuitive
Of what is natural and what is not,
And quicker do they recognize a doll
Than train'd diplomatists a man. Meanwhile,
Since Diadema's childhood first assumed
Serene dominion o'er its island realm,
The world was ten years older, and thereby
Entitled to be ten times wiser too.
The King convoked his Council, and announced
The time, in his opinion, had arrived
To satisfy the public interest felt
In his child's education. "With concern
We hear it rumour'd," said His Majesty,
"That there be certain persons who presume

The King proposes to establish a Board of Control.

To doubt the wisdom of Our Government.
'Tis time to stop this scandal in the State,
And, gentlemen, I call for The Control."

Alarm of his Ministers at this innovation.

As when in some thick-crowded theatre
A sudden voice calls "Fire!" or as a flock
Of sparrows startled by the sportsman's gun
When they are feeding on a field of wheat,
So, at that ominous word (interpreted
By each one as a menace to himself)
The ministers, upstarting, stared around
In all directions. For their only thoughts
Not put to flight were thoughts of flight itself.
The first one to recall his scatter'd wits
Was the Lord Chancellor, whose cleverness
Was never long at fault. And he explain'd,
"Your Majesty's advisers, to a man,
With uncontrollable emotion rise,
Responsive to the call for The Control!"

The King was toucht. "With pleasure," he resumed,

"We recognize this unanimity.

For principles, when properly laid down,

Are like triumphal arches—lofty, large,

Solid, and monumental. That's enough.

They stand apart, with space to show them off,

And, tho' they lead to nothing, they look well.

Practical life about its business goes,

Passing upon the right side or the left,

But always on one side of them, no doubt.

Their value is, however, none the less;

For in them, as it passes, it admires

The symbol of a satisfied idea,

Of which idea, if it did not see

That satisfying symbol, it would have

No satisfactory idea at all.

Control, then, is the principle whereon

Our educational policy we base,

He explains his principle about the value of principles,

And his idea about ideas.

And its best symbol is Publicity.
Our dear child's education must henceforth
Be publicly conducted." Reassured
About the application and effect
Of that uncomfortable word Control,
The Ministers breathed freely, and forthwith
Drew up the following regulations. "*First.*
A Board, to be appointed and composed
As hereinafter mention'd, will direct
The intellectual accomplishments
Of the Crown Princess, Diadema. Once
Every eight days, a teacher, by the Board
Selected for that purpose, will read out
In public, and Her Royal Highness write,
The weekly lesson previously approved
By a Committee of the Board. The date
Of every lesson will be notified
Beforehand in the Court Gazette, and seats
Provided for the Public and the Press.

Orders in Council.

Second. Eight days before the day prescribed,
The officiating teacher will transmit
A copy of his lecture to the Board.
The paper for this purpose must be stamp'd."
[The stamp was a proviso introduced
By the Financial Secretary.] "*Third.*
All deviation by the lecturer
In his delivery from the written text
Is punishable with imprisonment
For six months, or a fine proportional."
[That clause was drafted by the Ministers
Of Justice and Instruction. But the fine
Was due to their Financial Colleague.] "*Fourth.*
The paper by Her Royal Highness penn'd,
As soon as finisht, shall be handed round
By two Court Pages, for the public eye
To examine and admire. And if one fault
Can be detected in it, the next day
The two Court Pages shall be soundly whipp'd

In public. *Pereat puer regius,*
Fiat Justitia!" These rules received
The unanimous approval of the Press,
And the first trial of them answer'd well.
The Court was cramm'd. The public interest
Evinced in the new system was immense;
Nor is it possible to say how long
It might have lasted if it had survived
The system's novelty. An accident
Happen'd, however. One unlucky day
The manuscript of the Crown Princess proved,
When handed round, to be no counterpart
Of the Professor's eloquent discourse
About the government of that wise Prince,
Peter the Great. For what the Princess wrote
Was a long treatise upon Alcohol.
The two Court Pages were severely whipp'd
In public afterwards; and this mistake
Was the sole evidence of carelessness

Successful inauguration of the new system.

Unexpected miscarriage of it;

Detected in the Royal Pupil's tasks.
But then, what clever carelessness it was!
What covert irony! The Ambassador
Of Muscovy immediately applied
To have his passports sent him. The Gazette
Announced next morning the indefinite
Postponement of the customary course
Of weekly lectures, and that afternoon
'Twas rumour'd that the Princess was unwell.
Three days the Court Physician stay'd at home,
And kept his carriage station'd at his door,
Daily expecting orders to attend
Her Royal Highness. But they never came.
The fourth day, when he ventured out, he found
His other patients had meanwhile got well
Without his aid, and he at once resolved
Not to neglect again their humble claims
Upon his valuable care and skill.
Days pass'd. The Princess from the Promenade

Which gives rise to a Russian Question.

Course adopted by the Court Physician, and remarkable cures effected by it.

Was miss'd. The King appear'd pre-occupied.

Strange story set about by some common people.

Some boors, who at a tavern late one night
Had been carousing, afterwards declared
That, as they pass'd the palace, strolling home,
A light from Master Pilgram's casement lured
Their curiosity; and one of them,
Upon his comrades' shoulders climbing, peep'd
In at the casement. There (so ran their tale)
He saw, and told his fellows, who in turn
Climb'd up, and peep'd, and also saw (Good Heavens!)
The Princess sitting—not as it behoves
Princesses to sit always, looking straight
Before them—but, regardless of all rules
Both of decorum and anatomy,
As if her neck were broken, with her head
Turn'd round, and looking down behind her back.
Still stranger! She had taken off one arm,
Her right arm, which was screw'd into a vice;

And Master Pilgram, with his sleeves tuckt up,
Was filing it, and putting a small wheel
Into the elbow, just as quietly
As you might sew a button on your shirt.
Strangest of all ! the King was standing by,
Yet did not seem to care a button, he
That call'd himself the father of his child,
While that mysterious Master of Black Arts
Was massacring the Royal Innocent.
This story was too strange to be believed ;
And Common Sense, rejecting it, affirm'd
That, since the Princess had been out of health,
Pilgram, perchance, had bled her in the arm ;
But that to bleed it more conveniently
He first took off her arm, was clearly false.
A barber might as well take off men's heads
To comb and brush them. Clearly, too, the absurd
Position, to the Princess by those clowns

Triumph of Common Sense.

Attributed, was incompatible
With the anatomy of vertebrates,
And that respect all royal skeletons
Owe more particularly to themselves.
Thus, Common Sense prevail'd. And thus may all
Whose privilege it is to dig the mine
Of mortal truths for which posterity
Will prize this book, perceive how Providence
Hath made it difficult to long mislead
Public Opinion. Justice in the end
Prevails—when, having placed beyond the reach
Of restitution his ill-gotten gains,
A rogue is in his hundredth robbery
Detected, laid up by the heels at last,
And made to mend his manners. In the end
Peace triumphs—as it triumph'd in that famed
Westphalian Treaty over thirty years
Of bloodshed, after every one was kill'd,
And every province ravaged. Even so

Things to be thankfully acknowledged

Doth Common Sense prevail (as Peace o'er War,
Justice o'er Knavery) when every fop
Hath been applauded, every fool believed.
And this is a great comfort. But the cause
Of that unfortunate mistake which cost
The Muscovite Ambassador's recall
Was, notwithstanding its simplicity,
One of the many things that would have been
But for this book for ever unexplain'd.
The seat of the intelligence in man
Not even the most intelligent research
Can quite intelligibly fix. But, lodged
Distributively, the intelligence
Of Pilgram's puppet dwelt in polisht groups
Of brazen cylinders, the Master changed
Daily to suit the subject as required.
The King, in Pilgram's absence, had one day
With his own hand arranged the Cylinders
Of Public Education; and, unused

To manage such a delicate machine,
Their order inadvertently transposed.
The puppet this confusion reproduced
With a mechanical fidelity,

A State Secret.

And hence the Russian Question. But beware,
All ye at whose disposal we have placed
This confidential statement. Bear in mind
That a State secret is a serious thing,
And never to be treated as a joke.
Altho' indeed, if treated seriously,
A joke may sometimes be more dangerous
Than all the serious secrets of the State.

The Principle is again put into operation.

After the accident recorded here,
Nothing again occurr'd to interrupt
The course of studies publicly resumed
By the Crown Princess. Years went by. The time
For Court Balls and Court Concerts came at last,
And then it was that Pilgram's art achieved

The triumph of mechanic etiquette.
A telephonic apparatus, placed
In contact with the Puppet Princess, ran
Below the palace floors to where, unseen,
The Master's touch upon the keys controll'd
Her conversation. 'Twas consider'd good.
"The Princess speaks not much, but she speaks well,"
The Court remark'd. "Her Royal Highness seems
Subject," said one, "to absences of mind."
"Ay, but how charming are they! And how well
And wittily they prove banalities
Repugnant to her nature!" said the rest.
"The other day, when she had deign'd to ask
The Foreign Envoy who arrived last week
That customary question of the Court,
Is it the first time, Sir, that you have been
In Diadummiania?—and he
Said, *Yes, your Royal Highness, the first time,*

With surprising results.

The Princess, with a thoughtful pause, replied,

Then you must find things here a good deal changed.

Diplomatic tact.

But for the tact of the diplomatist

To whom this observation was address'd,

It might have complicated matters much

Between his Court and that of Diadum.

But he, in silence, had profoundly bow'd.

Profound ability! That bow might mean,

If render'd into speech, a thousand things

Tremendously significant and yet

Conveniently correct: a compromise

Between denial and assent, a kind

Of courteous reservation of the right

Of contradiction at some future time,

That cleverly evaded the parade

Of an offensive incredulity:

Or, construed otherwise, it might imply

A stinging epigram, a repartee

Unutterably bitter, tho' withal

In its expression perfectly polite.
The Envoy, for the tact he had display'd
On this occasion, by return of post
Received the sky-blue ribbon and grand cross
Of Knight Commander of the Uncatchable Carp.
The blazon of that Order was a fish
Between a fish-hook and a frying-pan
Passant, the motto of it *Point de zèle.*

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY.

VI.

THE KING.

'Tis noon and May. About the happy lawns
Sweet airs are breathing. Sunny showers have wash'd
The morning white, and deck'd the gleaming buds
With drops and sparks. There's gladness in the grass,
And a light fluttering music thro' the leaves,
Where amorous birds their busy loves begin.
The Audience is dismiss'd, the Cabinet
Dispersed, the realm for four-and-twenty hours
Govern'd till further orders, and the King
Into his library retired. This means
The Royal Mind, immersed in private depths

Diadumenianus, reared in the lap of Dame Rhoda (Tradition) and led by the counsels of Phantasos (Imagination), who, to befriend him, has assumed a form familiar to Tradition (Master Pilgram), passes, under their protecting influence, into the young company of his child, Diadema (Poetry still in its infancy), and is there associated with the sports of her childhood.

Of public business, must not be disturb'd.
The archives he peruses are inscribed
"FOREIGN AFFAIRS." One shelf is labell'd "SPAIN,"
And from the Realms of Ferdinand he fills
His pockets with Iberian pastes. The next
Is labell'd "FRANCE." The Court of Pharamond
Contributes crystal wands of lucid balm,
The honey of a hundred barleyfields
Congeal'd to amber. Candied fruits from Fez,
And rare rose-colour'd sweetmeats from Stamboul,
Complete these confidential files. The old man,
Like burglar booty-laden, looks around,
Listens suspicious, then with trembling hand
Touches the panel-portal's secret spring,
And down the hollow darkness disappears.
Go, triple type of noble weakness! Go

To his equipment for the part played by him in those sports all lands contribute some sweet gift.

In himself he combines the three highest dignities of human life: Royalty, Paternity, and Old Age. There is something paternal in the dignity of a king, something royal in that of a father. Yet in each of these two cases the dignity involves a weakness because it depends upon the recognition of it by its dependents; while in the third case it is so weak that it derives support from the united weaknesses of the other two; the most dignified type of Old Age being both paternal and royal.

Thy darkling ways, King, Father, and Old Man!
In thee the Kingdoms of the hoary Past
And infant Future for awhile unite
Their subject sweetnesses and sanctities
Beneath a present sovereignty. Death's self
But seldom dares the double stroke that smites
The twofold childhood of a father's joy.
Go! and with thee, shall loveliness be gone
From that self-murdering miserable world
Whence thou art passing, when it loves no more
Its kings and its forefathers. Leave it thou,
Unenvied, unimagined, unrebuked,
Its poor mechanical contrivances
For substituting companies for kings
And rules for rulers! It will be at best
Nothing but a negation of whate'er
It is no longer. But to thee, old King,
Never shall that unknowing world be known,
And Phantasos protects thee from the approach

A kingless and godless community, the *To Kalon* of the newest Solons.

Of its irreverent wretchedness. Go by!
The blest asylum of the bygone find,
And be forgotten while the world forgets
Its own forgetfulness, thou rescued type
Of triple weakness, triple dignity,
And triple worth, King, Father, and Old Man!
Past is the gallery, and the cistern gain'd.
Safe in his buoyant bulwark sits the King,
And rises slowly. Slowly darkness sinks
Beneath him, and above him dawns sweet day.

Rose-buds and snow-drops

A rosebud falls upon the old man's face,
Another rosebud, and another still,
A pelting rain of roses, and at last
A little rosy face thro' rippled curls
Peeps laughing down. O happy, happy Sire!
Thrice happy King! Where now be all thy plumed
And armèd guards? thy long-robed retinue
Of solemn councillors? thy stately cares?
What smooths the inveterate wrinkle from thy brow,

And beckons back thy boyhood from the past?
When little arms about thy bended neck
So rudely yet so tenderly were flung,
Instead of stepping down with tread sedate
And mien majestic as becomes a king,
Didst thou not reel with tottering ecstasy,
And roll thee laughing in the glad green grass?
And now thy crown upon the apple bough
Is hanging, and thy royal robe is doff'd,
And thou art running thro' the rosy bowers
After a little snowy frock that flits
And flutters like a butterfly on before.

Here dwelt the child. And round her innocent life
Love from the loom of the interfluent years
Wove tender veils between her and the world.
Day after day the sun out of the sea
Rose up to light her, and the good old King
Day after day rose up out of the well

United.

To love her. Daily light and love return'd,
And with them brought her father and the sun.
One day the grateful King to Pilgram said,
"My life is twofold. On the other side,
Out of this happy isle, when I behold
That painted puppet, to myself I say,
"This puppet is perfection, and 'tis thus
My little Diadema might have been."

The King desires to give greater pliancy to the Principle he has adopted.

But, speaking of the puppet, we must oil
The curtsying contrivances. Last night
The springs went stiffly when the Princess danced
Her minuet with the Prince of Padua,
And it was noticed. The machinery
Of the piano-playing still works well.

In the absence of the Ideal, the highest reality is attributed to the Fictitious, and a Puppet mistaken for a Principle.

Musical boxes cannot beat it. All
The scientifically-musical
Critics assert such virtuosity
Of execution never yet was known
Since first princesses on pianos deign'd

To play with their own fingers. Some days since,
An accident, that might have turn'd out ill,
Confirm'd this good opinion. When I placed
Her Royal Highness on the music-stool,
I quite forgot to place the stool itself
Where in relation to the instrument
I was to place it. And the puppet's hands,
Being a little too much to the right,
Instead of playing, as they should have play'd,
The score thro' in C Major, play'd it all
Just one tone higher. As for me myself,
I never even noticed it. Next day
I learn'd, however, from an article
That nearly fill'd the Musical Gazette,
With what consummate science all at once
My daughter that concerto had transposed
From the Ionic (without one mistake)
Into the Hypomyxolydian Tone,
By substituting for the Major Seventh

A musical *tour de force.*

Method, uninformed by Imagination, attains its highest perfection when it substitutes art for insight, science for art, and terminology for science.

And Third, the Minor Third and Seventh. Forthwith,
One of the critics having tried to prove
That 'twas in fact the Hypodoric Tone,
And not the Hypomyxolydian one,
The Princess had employ'd, between them all
Broke out a fiercely vehement dispute,
As full of unpronounceable Greek words
As of invectives—*nete*, and *paranete*,
And *lichanos*, and *hypatè*, and the names
Of only those musicians who are dead,
Or would be dead if they had lived at all,
Terpander, Guido of Arezzo, even
Pythagoras, whom no one ever knew.
In this process Criticism has the last word.
What a bewildering machinery
These critics have devised for grinding out
The grist of things with such a clatter and whirl
Of terrifying terms, that only they
Can tell the meaning of the din they make!
Some men there be who do not fear a wolf,

But take him soon as 'Look you' by the throat
If they should meet one in a mountain pass,
Yet are they disconcerted by the sound
Inside a windmill, while the miller moves
Undaunted, tho' a coward he may be,
Thro' all the hubbub of its cogs and bolts
As quietly as an official clerk
Would docket a death warrant, or endorse
A declaration of immediate war.
Just so the critics in their mill." "Just so!"
The Master echo'd, and the King went on,
"Two selves within me for dominion strive,
Making me theirs by turns. And one of them
Is not the King, nor like him. Nay, the King
He from the King's own breast, if that could be,
Would banish. In this island of delights]
The King is both his subject and his slave;
For, with the cares, the compensating charms
That dwell in kingly circumstance are dead,

And Diadum in Diadema dies
At his unkingly bidding. Back once more
Across yon narrow straits in mine own hall,
The King resumes his sway. But there at times
So perfect seems that puppet, I myself
Am half persuaded to believe all true
Its mimic graces, and proclaim a doll
The heiress of my kingdom and my crown.
Here, all is changed within me. Here, I dread
My distant self that ominously frowns
On these enjoyments, beckoning from mine arms
The treasured life made mine by their embrace.
O Pilgram, can she ever face that Court?
I tremble but to think of it, and feel
A thousand nameless fears, tho' well I know
The child hath gifts no teaching gives. Her gift
Of song, for instance, above all her song!
How sweet to hear her singing! Seems it not
A language of her own that must be sung,

Inspiration without art.

Else it would have no meaning, tho' it means
Everything when she sings it? She herself,
What is she, when she sings? My child, or born
Among the light-springs of some throbbing star,
And wafted hither only for awhile
On wings whose flight anon may bear her hence?
Where is it, what she sings of? Hard to guess!
But when she sings, athwart my spirit comes
A something felt like nothing felt before,
A something found like all things miss'd till then,
A memory of what hath never been,
A hope of what I know can never be!"

Scarce had the King this strange avowal made,
Before he felt ashamed of it, and sigh'd,
"See what such fancies come to! Follow them,
And farewell common sense! I'll not deny,
Good Master Pilgram, that I sometimes doubt
If it be proper for a Princess, born

Sole heiress of a reputable throne,
To sing as naturally as a bird
That never has been taught to sing at all,
Art without inspiration.
But grows up wild among the leaves. At least,
I wish that she would sometimes sing real airs
That every one knows when and where to praise ;
Airs that, when sung, make every listener fear
And tremble for the voice, as for a bold
And rash rope-dancer who might break his neck,
And whom you naturally must applaud
With infinite relief when, at the last,
He by three pirouettes his perch regains.
Ay, those are real emotions, every one
Is capable of feeling ! But alas,
When Diadema sings you feel them not.
You listen without fear, you even forget
All, as you listen, but to listen still
To her wild music. And full sure am I,
Could we discover whence such music comes,

'Twould be forbidden by mine own police.
How, after listening to it, can one sign,
With due consideration of details,
Decrees forbidding citizens to place
Unfasten'd flower-pots upon window-sills?
How can one ponder with impartial mind
The question whether Whigs will do more harm
Than Tories? Tories revolutionize
The Monarchy more rapidly than Whigs?
The other day, when at the Council Board
My Minister of Justice read me out
A long report of his on Law Reform,
Mysteriously within myself I heard
A mocking echo of those melodies
The child sings to the sea-wind and the sea.
And suddenly I cried, 'O sing once more
The ninety-seventh paragraph sublime
Of that seraphic and enchanting Code
Of Criminal Procedure!' By good luck,

Practical politics.

An awkward mistake.

Looking at my Lord Chancellor's state wig,
I saw its curls were standing stiff on end
With horror, and the sight of them recall'd
My wits to the realities of life.
But such distractions must not be again :
For I detected, as the Board dispersed
In some confusion, an exchange of looks
And whisperings between my Ministers,
That augur'd mischief—'*Circumstance foreseen,*
And by the nineteenth clause provided for'—
'*Family Statute*'—'*Salique law*'—'*clear case*'—
'*The Younger Branch*'—'*Mental derangement*'—'*State*
In danger'—'*Regency!*' Ha, 'Regency'?
I'll regency the rascals! 'Case foreseen'?
'Mental derangement'? I'll derange their plots
Foreseen, or unforeseen! I'll . . . . . "

Didema's Song.

Piercing sweet
Above the angry old King's hoary head,

Soar'd, bird-like, from the sea-girt balcony
A voice that waked the sleeping isle with song
Seductive as Calypso's. And therewith,
Woo'd by its witchcraft, out of glens remote
And neighbouring bowers, from the ethereal hills
And headlong streams, responsive strains arose ;
Innumerable melodies, that turn'd
All secret throbbings of the palpitant heart
Of Silence into raptures audible,
As thoughts to sounds are turn'd along the strings
Of a thrill'd harp. It was the manifold cry
Of Being, yet unbodied, claiming birth,
And challenging quick response, ay or nay,
From all things in the universe. Appeals,
Blithe and imperious, answer'd from afar
By fluttering notes of welcome faint with fear,
A happy fear, and full of timorous joy !
Lost in such music's tempest of delight,
Sea-like the soul flows ignorantly forth

To which the universe responds.

The music of it is to the soul what movement is to the sea :

With all her forces, and from all her deeps,
Not knowing whither. Wave on wave, and thought
On thought, arise and mingle and roll on
In ever vaster, more voluminous throngs.
They question one another whence they come,
And what they be. "Art thou Eternity?
I am Desire." "I Beauty." "I am Love."
"Let us be one!" Embracing, they unite:
And then, surcharged, the sobbing billow bursts,
Rebuilds itself, and is again dissolved,
And again built and broken. "Whence art thou?
"From the far depths. And thou?" "From the far heights."
"Thy name?" "I am Sublimity. And thine?"
"Poësy. To the heavens and their high stars
Uplift me, brother, on thy breast aloft!"
Still'd to a sigh is that melodious storm.
Soft calm succeeds. A silent transport thrills
The sea of thoughts. Sublimity and Depth

Have been united, and from their embrace
A god is being born. The lyric winds
Breathe low, the halcyon broods upon the wave,
And o'er the slow-subsiding tumult flits
A tremulous aw'd gladness, whispering "Hush!"

All this, but in a language of its own
That into ours is untranslatable,
The sorceries of that wild song reveal'd
To those who heard it. Pilgram, arms outstretch'd,
Eyes flashing, feet scarce touching earth, and all
His godhood quivering in him, recognized
And hail'd the accents of his native heaven:
But the old King, his elbows on his knees
Based, and his stooping head between his hands,
Sat huddled upon the low wall of the well
That separated and yet form'd the link
Between those lives so closely each to each
By love united, tho' so all unlike,

Eyes that kindle.

Eyes that weep

So different yet so indivisible,
His own and Diadema's. In himself
He knew not what was passing. But his heart
Answer'd the child's bewildering melodies
In the mute language it best understood,
A language whose soft syllables are tears.

Is't not possible to understand in another tongue? —HORATIO.

VII.

THE PRINCESS.

An Idyll.

THE new-born babe upon its mother's breast
Lacks nothing. But the loss of life begins
At life's beginning, in the guise of growth;
And every gain, the tributary years
Bring with them to enrich it, fills the room
Of something lost. The blossom wants a grace
That vanish'd with the bud; when comes the fruit
The flower is gone; and ah, which most prevail,
The gains or losses of the neutral time
'Twixt bud and blossom, when nor boy nor girl
Are either man or woman, or any more
That perfect sexless creature so complete

In its own perishable charm, a child?

The departure of Childhood.

The lingering gentleness of childhood hides
Its soon-dishonour'd presence in the heart
Of boisterous boyhood, when the little hand,
Within whose clasping fingers it was fain
To insinuate a perpetual caress,

Leaves a difference between boyhood

Turns to a fist that combatively grasps
A flower-stem like the pommel of a sword:
And, while the force of a disfiguring growth
Converts what was erewhile a butterfly
Into a chrysalis that disavows
The ashamed remembrance of its own lost wings,
The growing boy's embarrass'd consciousness
Of those propensities that are the cause
Why every garden hath a garden wall
Creates within his predatory breast
A stealthy greed of the forbidden fruit,

And girlhood.

Ere yet the fruit itself hath power to tempt.
Not so the crescent maiden. Husht she moves

About a world where all familiar things,
As in a dream, have furtively assumed
A strange and undivined significance,
Half wooing and half warning her. She feels
Her hesitating steps held back from harm,
Haunted, and over-hover'd, and pursued
By a protecting phantom. But to feel
Protected is, perchance, to be aware
That there is peril somewhere. With shy guess
That shuns the revelation it invokes,
To Modesty, her mystic guardian new,
The woman-instinct in the maiden-child
Confidingly for secret guidance turns.
She knows not why the watch is set, nor whence
The danger it mysteriously denotes:
But what she carelessly enjoy'd before
As common treasures, coveted by none
Since shared with all, must needs, if menaced, be
More precious to her; and, if watch'd, less safe.

Et præsidium et dulce decus.

The Eden of her Infancy remains
On all sides round her, innocent and fair:
But thro' its roses, and its revelling leaves,
She sees at intervals the boundary walls,
Suspects the existence of a world beyond,
And feels the limits of security.

What startles her What brings the sudden blush,
The sudden sigh? Hath some wild bird, that bears
In his blown plumage the bewildering breath
Of freedom, or the blush of feathers stain'd
Red by strange fruits, alighted for awhile
Upon the battlements of Paradise?
Or where unlifted branches hide the dim
Husht gateway, hath she heard some venturous key
Trying its never-yet-attempted locks?
No! 'Twas the nightingale's first evening note
That trembled from the uninvaded bowers.
And yet what wonder that the maiden starts?

The moonborn music of the nightingale
Hath in it ever something from afar.

But Diadema with the growing years
Outgrew not infancy. It grew with her,
And, mingling with her maiden beauty, clung
As clings the calyx where the flower unfolds.
Nothing had changed around her. In herself
Nothing, begun and ended, mark'd the bound
Of that blest kingdom we, who measure it
By our remembrance only, left too soon
To learn its limits. Thither we return
Long afterward, full weary of the world
Since traversed, and yet know it not again.
Like those Phœnician voyagers we are,
Who, voyaging in search of lands unknown,
Sail'd round the globe, and reach'd at last a land
They knew not. 'Twas the land they first had left,
Sailing in search of other lands beyond.

The child-hood of Poësy.

And the poësy of Child-hood.

So we, who call that fair land Poësy,
Which is forgotten Childhood reattain'd.
But slowly, softly, imperceptibly,
Into pure poësy pure childhood pass'd
United in Diadema. From hour to hour thro' Diadema's days;
As round the southward traveller melts unmark'd
The Italian into the Sicilian sky,
Or as the Ganges on its bosom bears
The Brahmin floating to his sacred goal,
Seaward and heavenward on the selfsame wave.
"She changes not," said Rhoda to the King,
"But with an annually differing charm
Remains herself. I understand at last
The meaning of the dragon in my dream.
Sleeping, from grace to grace her childhood grows,
Without an effort. The bright years of it
Are gems from earth, and sea, and sky distill'd,
Each in its turn more lovely than the last,

And she, the crescent diadem that links
With golden interfusion gem to gem."
Not lonesome in her solitary isle,
Albeit alone, did Diadema dwell.
Pilgram, her father, and Dame Rhoda came
And went miraculously. 'Twas not strange.
So did the blossoms. So did everything.
What had been always, always still would be,
For why should it be otherwise? The sun
Into the sea went naturally down,
But not more naturally than the King
Went down into the well. They both came back,
And that was all she knew, or cared to know.
She never would have thought of digging holes
Into the earth, and searching them to find
What happen'd to the flowerets underground;
Nor thought of plunging in the sea to seek
The sun beneath it. Why, then, should she think
Of asking explanations from the well?

The child's world,

Wherein miracles are matters of course.

It was her father's way of going down
At nightfall, as the sun's way was the sea.
And morning after morning, when the sun
Had high enough in heaven at noontide climb'd
To peep into the well, the old King rose.
The sun rose first, the King rose afterwards :
He rested with her all the glad day long :
At night she fell asleep, and he was gone :
So was the sun. The sun was first to go,
Since first to come. The sun would come again
To-morrow, as the sun came yesterday,
Bringing the old King back. Who doubts the sun ?
Her father and the sun had never fail'd.
What joy it was to welcome his return !
He look'd so comely, rising up his well
Out of his dusky dwelling underneath,
His golden crown upon his silver locks,
His sceptre in his hand, his royal robe
Upon his shoulders ! With maternal care,

And infinite precaution and advice,
The little maiden help'd him to descend
Out of his oaken bucket. Half his life
Pass'd in the bottom of a well, explain'd
His ignorance about all sorts of things
It was her pride to teach him. How, indeed,
Would fathers ever know, or ever see,
The things that are important to be known
And noticed in this wondrous world, if left
Uneducated by their children? "Come!
Here is a bird's nest, with four tiny birds,
And each of them was only yesterday
A smooth round speckled pebble. Upon the shore
Are little pebbles too, that birds would be
Had they the chance; but these the sea scrapes back,
And turns them into fishes. Hast thou heard
The story of the Butterflies? Not yet?
Then listen, Father! Yesterday, there hung
On yonder branch a cluster of green nuts.

Diadema imparts to her father News of great importance;

She being in possession of private information about passing events,

Green nuts they look'd, but nuts they were not. Each
A case was, full of woven fineries,
Rare tissues by the cunning Spider spun
As only she knows how. The Butterflies
Had found this out. And so by night they came,
And, while the Spider slept, they oped and search'd
Her treasure-cases. There were robes of rose,
And robes of blue, and there were yellow robes,
Broider'd and beautiful with sparks and spots.
These to the Butterflies the Spider gave,
But only on condition that they go
And fetch her all the colours she requires
For her fine spinning. For those colours come
From far away. The blue is from the sky,
The yellow from the sun, the purple tints
Are from the sea and mountains, and the red
From evening's crimson clouds. The Butterflies
Go flying all about the flowers, for there
They often find the colours that she wants,

And then they go no further. When the robes
That all the Summer they have worn are soil'd,
Ashamed to wear them, to the moon they go,
And there they get their wing-robes washt pure white
Before the Springtime. Then the Spider weaves
Fresh colours in. But in the Winter-tide,
When their moon-whiten'd wings they have put by
For Spring's return, a cold wind often blows,
So sharp that down it shakes and scatters them
Thick on the ground. That grieves the Butterflies:
And, if you touch or take them in your hand,
The white wings, disappearing, leave behind
Only warm tears the Butterflies have wept
Because they cannot wear their wings again."
"Whence dost thou know all this?" the old King sigh'd.
"'Tis Pilgram that hath told me," said the child,
"And he knows everything. Dame Rhoda, too!

In which the King is deeply interested; but which, having escaped the

vigilant notice of his Lord Chancellor, would otherwise have remained unknown to His Majesty.

'Twas she that told me all about the girl
Who wept because she was to wed a Frog,
And yet the Frog was all the while a Prince.
I would not mind so much had I to wed
A little bright-eyed big-mouth'd Frog. We three
In Frogland, at the bottom of a well,
Would live together, thou, and he, and I.
The Rain-drops tell the Frogs so many things,
When they, to see their cousins, have come down!
Their cousins are the common Water-drops
That here together dwell in pools and ponds.
They say it is Earth's fault, and punishment,
That Heaven is still so far away from Earth.
I know not what the fault was; but I know
Heaven, for Earth's sake, hath wept so many tears
That all the ponds, and even all the sea,
Are fill'd quite full. But this could not be help'd,
For tears must still fall somewhere. The kind

Heaven

Thinks, 'Since the Water is not as the Earth,
But almost, as it were, a child of mine,
It cannot be forbid to go and see
The Water sometimes.' So when Heaven comes down
To see the Water, if the day be fine,
The Water, for Heaven's welcoming, invites
Earth's woods and mountains. There, they all have leave
To stand head-downwards, and to dance about
Blithe with the little ripples, if a breeze
Sets the dance going. That reposes them.
Out of the water, they must always stand
Head-upwards, and stay always in one place.
Thou good old Father, I could talk with thee
For ever about all things! For, indeed,
No one knows how to listen half so well
As thou dost." That was true. The glad old King

He is strongly affected by this intelligence.

Knew how to listen. And in every tale
His little teacher told him he believed.
Nothing had ever seem'd to him so wise,
So fascinating, or so full of truth,
As Diadema's stories. Years, that left
Less infantine his fair instructress, found
His faith in her more childlike. Blossom-girt,

The departure of the swallows.

About the casement of the craggy tower
Wherein she dwelt, a marble balcony
Had Pilgram built, with golden balustrade.
Here every morning old Dame Rhoda brought
Her spinning-wheel, and many a ballad sung
Or story told, while Diadema watch'd
The wide sea, listening dreamily. One day,
"The swallows are departing!" said the child.
"And thou, too, wilt be going hence ere long,"
The Dame replied. "Go hence?" the child ask'd.
"Where?"
"To thine own Kingdom." "Is not this mine own?

What is that other Kingdom?" And the Dame
Answer'd, "It is a land thou wilt be call'd
To govern in thy father's stead, for he
Is growing old and tired." The child looked sad.
"My father tired?" she said. "I saw not that.
What is he tired of? Here shall he remain
When next he comes, and I will sing him songs
The honey-bees have taught me; songs that bring
Sleep from the sighing hearts of Summer woods,
Like a tame bird." The old Dame shook her head.
"The crown," she said, "makes this impossible."
Gaily the child replied, "That cannot be,
For is it not his own crown, all his own,
To do with as he pleases?" "Nay, not so,"
Dame Rhoda sigh'd. "The crown, child, is not his.
He is the crown's. For to his crown a king
Belongs, as doth a father to his child.
Children and crowns are the great gifts of God,
And cannot be got rid of. King and Sire,

To thee, his child, one half thy father's heart
Belongs, and to his kingly crown the rest."
The Princess mused; then said, with moisten'd eyes,
"Only one half? And I must share him, then,
With others? He whom others call their king,
And I my father! Can a heart's two halves
Make up one whole if each loves something else?
Nay, were it mine, I would not wear that crown!"
"Yet must thou wear it," said the Dame, "ere long.
And thou, I trust, wilt wear it many a year,
And suffer it with queenly patientness."

Dame Rhoda instructs Diadema in the duties of the crown.

But Diadema suddenly exclaim'd,
"What, if I gave my crown away?" "Thy crown
Thou canst not give away," the Dame replied,
"For there is none to give it to; and they
That were not born to wear it, know not how."

Premonitions

The little Princess hung her head. The thought
Of that inevitable crown return'd
Continually afterwards to vex

Her joy in all the present with the fear
Of an unwelcome future: and full oft
"Oh, is there no one that will rescue me
And all I love from it?" she sigh'd unheard.
And still the Summers came and went, and still
The Winters: and the flowers fell, and the frosts:
But flower and frost, Summer and Winter-tide,
Came not and went not as of old, like friends
Who, going, know that when they come again
They shall find nothing alter'd. In the child
Chaste mysteries were passing. Day by day
The sunward season of the virgin year
Transforms itself, and wonders at the change:
Each morrow some surprising charm reveals
In secret places, by the timid time
Demurely welcomed with suggestive sighs:
At dawn, from dells and hollows, bare before,
New buds are peeping: and along the husht
Rich heavens, at eve, a rosy softness falls,

Of the departure of childhood,

And the coming of womanhood.

Preluding the approach of mellower hours.
So, daily, as her deepening maidenhood
Her little body with new beauties deck'd,
Did Diadema, flower-like, turn them all
Into new blushes that were prophecies.
And fifteen times, since first her bowery realms
Their maiden monarch ruled, the fourfold year
Had turn'd the green leaf golden. Fifteen times
The moonborn months had brought the snows, and brought
The snowdrops, and those flowers of frailer bud
That blossom in the front of May, and fall
Ere June is over. Fifteen jewels fair
Dame Rhoda counted in the crown of gems
Wrought by the unsleeping dragon of her dream:
And now no more thro' Diadema's isle
The primrose lit the pathways of the Spring,
But Summer and the rose were everywhere.

It draws near the season.
—HORATIO.

VIII

THE SHEPHERD.

THE late moon, captured by the coming dawn,
Below the sea's edge linger'd. 'Twas a night
Of Summer in mid-solstice, when the dark
Is starriest, and soon dies. Dame Rhoda slept.
But Diadema, risen from restless dreams,
Was leaning o'er her golden balcony,
And listening to the solitary sound
Of waves that, hid in whisperous shadows, heaved
With a soft yearning murmur. Not for joy,
As heretofore her happy wont had been,
But for the solace of a new-born sense
Of nameless sadness, she began to sing.

And all along the lone night wandering went
The wistful music of the song she sang,
Where there was none to hear it. None to hear?
What genuine song was ever sung unheard,
Tho' sung not in the hearing of the world?
Athwart night's trembling silence, clear and sweet,
Another voice, responsive to her own,
In song came floating, as athwart dark meers
The swimming stag at midnight seeks his mate.
At first she doubted if a voice it were,
Or but of hers a mocking echo borne
Upon the light wind from the lifted shell
Of some wild sea-sprite. Wonderingly, she stopp'd
Her singing, listen'd, and then sang again,
And again stopp'd, and listen'd. But the voice
Still, from the distance, thro' the silence sang.
Maiden, it sang, *a boy's heart sent me hither*
To answer thine, whose voice hath spoken to it.
Come! Let us wander, he, thou, I, together

Song answers song: which echo can only mimic.

The wide world thro'! For short is Song's way
thro' it
From heart to heart: and, that way, soul meets soul,
Safe tho' between them all the wide world roll!
Thus, deep in darkness and in distance hid,
A spirit sang responsive to the song
Of her own spirit, and her soul had found
A soul whose language was the same as hers.

The Shepherd.

She was a king's child, in a palace born,
By a god guarded. But beyond the crags
Her steps had never climb'd, and narrow sea,
Another child, whose heart to hers attain'd
Its destin'd way, among the mountains dwelt.
A shepherd boy, he roam'd his native hills,
The unguarded guardian of their wandering tribes
Of hardy goats: not kingborn, nor himself
Of kinglier circumstance, or higher state,
Than Hebron's Harper when he shepherded

His father's flocks, beyond the camps of Saul.
Born of the People and the Mountains: born
Where strength is strongest, patience patientest,
(Far from the sordid cities that entomb
That turbulent and miserable crowd
Whose meanness mocks the honest name it takes,
And, being but the Populace, presumes
To call itself the People) lofty life
He lack'd not, tho' of lowly birth. But ah!
This lord of the lone eagle-haunted heights
And the Princess. Was Diadummiania's peasant, she
Its princess; and the inexorable code
Of Diadummianian law forbade
A shepherd's son, of peasant birth, to love
The daughter of a king, or a king's daughter
And princess born, to give her princely heart
To a born peasant. Love and Circumstance
Were rivals ever since the world began:
And, neither to the other yielding, each

Scourges and racks the wretch who disobeys
Its despot rule. But Song hath softer laws,
And Dream a larger freedom. Dream, then, still
Of love, young Shepherd, and of love sing on,
Till, singing, dreaming ever, thou thyself,
And she, thy sung-and-dream'd-of love, released
From perishable circumstance, become
An everlasting dream, a deathless song!
The Mountains have their dreams, the People theirs
And both are patient dreamers. Songs have they,
Moreover, immemorial as themselves,
Taught by the mountains to the mountaineer:
Lays, never lost, whose legendary strains
Are gifts the People from its fathers got,
And, unforgetting, to its children gives:
Remember'd records of a lyric race,
In whose remote descent the People's sons
As lofty and as old a lineage claim
As those fair kings the People's childlike faith

A Pastoral.

Confirms for ever upon thrones renown'd ;
For, prince and peasant, each is Song's own child,
And equal-born all Song's own children be.
What was it that, in song, drew forth the heart
Of the young Shepherd, filling the warm spheres
Of starry darkness with its wild appeals
The Star of Promise. And passionate welcomes? 'Twas a promise hail'd
With doubtful wonder, but undoubting faith,
In the bright upspring of a prophet star
To Kepler, to Copernicus, unknown,
Unguess'd by Galileo, unreveal'd
To wondering Tycho when he saw the light
In Cassiopeia that is seen no more :
But hail'd by Gaspar, Melchior, Balthazar,
The Star of Promise : star whose lustre led
The prescient footsteps of the Shepherd Kings
To Bethlem, bearing for a babe divine
The mystic tribute of the Morning Land.
A star, and not a star : a light from heaven

Hail'd by the heart alone ; and by the heart
That hails it haply half misunderstood,
Yet not in vain all trusted. Mary's Babe
The adoring Magians deem'd of royal birth,
Mistaking His true kingdom. But in Him
The promise of a blessing long invoked
They trusted, and in trusting it were blest.
So sang the Shepherd to the nameless star
That on his soul was rising : so his heart
Follow'd its gracious guidance, bearing gifts
From boyhood's golden orient. And a voice
That shed forth music as a star sheds light
Answer'd the singing of his heart with song.
A maiden's soul, it sang, *hath sent me hither,*
Shepherd, to find in thine the mate 'twas needing.
Come ! Let us wander, she, thou, I, together
The wide world thro'. For safe where Song is leading,
Wide tho' the world that holds them far apart,
Soul beckons soul, and heart goes forth to heart.

Sym-
phony.

Adagio. Night after night the same appeal, the same
Unfailing response! Night by night in song
They communed with each other from afar,
The Shepherd and the Princess. Night by night
Their songs consorted, and their spirits touch'd.
And, daily, all day long the mingled hope
And memory of the last time, and the next,
Of those melodious midnight communings
Linger'd within them like an elfin light,
And hover'd round them like an elfin call,
And put a charm about them, circling them
With close enchantment, like the fluttering sphere
Of fire around some wizard altar traced.
And he became as those on whose changed life
A fairy's choice hath thrown its spell: to whom
Their home and kindred, their diurnal ways,
And all familiar things thenceforth appear
Distant, and strange, and foreign to the sense
Of their own nearness to an unseen power

That speaks in silence, glows in darkness, breathes
On sleeping lids, and burns upon shut lips.
For wheresoe'er they gaze, there shines a star;
And wheresoe'er they move, there sounds a song:
A star unseen, a song unheard, by all
But they, in whose thrill'd ear for ever rings
The fairy music, and in whose wild eyes
Reflected gleam the lights of fairyland.
So strong the charm is on the life it lures,
And, luring, loosens from all else on earth,
That with its spell, if broken, breaks the heart
Of him whose being it hath once possess'd.
For never can the disenchanted wretch
Resume his former life's forsaken aims,
And, aimless left, he pines away, and dies.
Nor less, the lonely maiden of the isle
That night's enrapturing revelation fill'd
With incommunicable consciousness
Of a new sense, for ever set apart.

Allegro.

Andante.

Secluded, consecrated, and reserved
For service to a strange felicity.
And she became as some young priestess, vow'd
From childhood to cold Vesta's fane, whose deep
And dreaming eyes have drawn from heaven a god
To kiss them, when by night ambrosial arms
Have clasp'd her sleeping, and she wakes aware
Of a divine inexplicable bliss,
That came i' the dark, and went, to morn bequeathing
Mysterious promise of its blest return :
For all around her, from that moment, wears
A meaning aspect, mindful of the joy
Her seal'd lips whisper not to her husht heart :
Within the shrine a warmer glory broods,
Fine transports tremble thro' the sacred grove,
The lustral water flames like fire, the air
Heaves with intenser breathings. Day by day,
And night by night, since that first night's surprise
Dissolved the distance fate between them set,

So fared it with these two, whose days were dreams,
As all their nights were songs. And more than this,
No knowledge of love's need in others taught
Their innocence to crave. What fate denied
They miss'd not. Song and dream to them were all.
Two souls in song, two songs in one song blent, Rhapsodists.
Far from each other, far from all the haunts
Of human intercourse, the Herdsman's Son
And the King's Daughter dwelt. On either side
A kingdom. Boyhood's here, there Maidenhood's :
And on each kingdom's solitary throne
A child : and all between them the deep sea,
And the strong hills : and yet those kingdoms touch'd.
Themselves they knew not, and they knew still less
Each other, save in song : nor ever met,
Save in the mystic world song made for them.
But Pastoral Innocence, a shepherd boy,
And Maiden Majesty, a monarch's child,
Born of an age no chronicle records,

Across a land no traveller hath mapp'd,
Met in a song undated and unnamed:
Birth of Ballad Poetry.
And there, its bridal melodies begot
Songs upon songs that live from land to land,
From age to age, retaining in their tone,
Tho' far away from their forgotten source,
The sweetness, the simplicity, the strength
Of the True People's love for its True Kings,
And theirs for their True People. For of old
True Kings there were, and a True People too,
Ere twixt the People and its Kings arose
A Third Authority, displacing both
By forces stolen from the strength of each.
Those songs belong to all men, and to none.
They are the wanderers of the air we breathe;
Whose birdlike notes, untaught, unteachable,
Woo us, we know not whither; come to us,
We know not whence; move us, we know not why.
In vain we wonder who the singers were

That sung them first. The world's first singers found
Such songs already hovering here and there
Above them. Long before old Homer's birth,
And older far than he, the Iliad lived.

Song bears to after ages

For ever, when the hoary-headed King
Heard his child singing her wild song, to him
That song was like an epicedion
Pour'd from the burst heart of a dying swan,
That down the interminable stream of time,
Buried in its melodious bosom, bore
Him dead, and all the days he loved, to days
He knew not. Like a dream his life appear'd.
And as men, dreaming, sometimes know they dream,
And fear to wake because their dream is fair,
So he. His thoughts, his feelings, his beliefs,
All the conditions that to consciousness
Give character, seem'd creatures of that song,
Which, floating, bore them with it far away

To other ages and a world not his.
A barren world ! bitterly destitute
Of those delights that o'er the happy isle
Where he, Dame Rhoda, Pilgram, and the child
Together dwelt, spontaneously diffused
An effortless felicity creating
What after ages call the Age of Gold.
O Age of Gold ! Age that hath never been,
Nor ever shall be, yet for ever art !
O Golden age to every age once given,
For all the ages have their Golden Age,
Dear age of lost delights, sad memory seeks
Vainly in ages past, thou smilest still,
Safe in the happy heart that seeks thee not,
Because it knows not yet that thou art gone.
There, and there only, is the Age of Gold !

A dream of the Golden Age.

Stay, illusion! —HORATIO.

IX.

THE POPPY.

What the Poppy said to the Princess.

And wilt thou leave us? Leave thine island home,
Thy happy bowers, ere from their boughs be fled
The green leaf and the bird? These come and go,
But thou, once gone, wilt never come again.
The springtide of the world is once a year,
But once a life the springtide of the heart;
And when it goes 'tis gone for evermore.
Strangers will greet thee in the guise of friends.
But trust them not! The blossoms of thy life,
When they have pluck'd them from thee, they will
place
All faded twixt the leaves of bitter books,

To mark some haply-else-forgotten page
In the hard chronicle of lives not thine.
And thou wilt mourn, "I gave myself away
To many. One had this, another that.
Nothing, for all I gave them, gave they me!"
King's Daughter, thou art still thine own. Still thine
Is all thou art. It will be thine no more,
When thou art theirs. For thou canst separate
A drop of dew into a hundred drops,
Each subsequent droplet perfect as the first:
But not so canst thou subdivide thyself.
Amongst them, soon as thou art theirs, will they
Thy perfect self distribute. And for this,
Fain would they buy thee with a golden crown,
But keep thyself, and give that crown to me!
Give it to me, and I will hide it deep
Where few shall find it, and those few be souls
Worthy to wear its guarded glory! Night,
Deep night at noonday, will I round it weave,

So that to see it men must shut their eyes.

Give me thy crown, King's Daughter!

Nightly thus,

What Dame Rhodia saw in her vision.

Wan in the moonlight, like a wistful ghost,
With gestures passionately suppliant,
The pleading Poppy to the Princess spake.
'Twas Phantasos that to this lonesome isle
Had lured Favonius, from Typhoon's red lash
Its rescued victim bearing: here he rear'd
The regal pile whose rocky courts conceal'd
A kingdom's maiden heiress: here for those
Who, coming when the time appointed came,
For his pale votary's investiture,
Should bring the crown, and weave the robe, he wrought
Predestined ways: and here the heedful god
High pageant had for this event prepared,
Whereto his prescience shaped the unconscious course
Of antecedent circumstance. These things

The Poppy knew not. But, of things unknown
Still dreaming ever, in prophetic dreams
The approaching influence of his promised hour
That prophet dreamer felt. The desert crag,
His hard and solitary home, was turn'd
Into a palace: in its barren breast
Now beat a living heart, a child's, a queen's:
The rocky ledge, so long his lonesome lair,
Was now a gold-girt balcony, embower'd
In blossoms of all hues: and over these,
When she among them in the moonlight sat,
He, stooping, touch'd the maiden's pensive cheek
With his pale lips, and whisper'd in her ear,
And breathed thro' all her thoughts. To vex the hope
Within him hidden, unvictorious
Had striven the innumerable years.
For every Spring that hail'd a promise born,
A promise perisht every Winter mourn'd.

Eternal desire, the condition of eternal life.

Yet year by year unbaffled, year by year
Still faithful to the secret of his strength,
He gazed around him, and around him saw
Nothing but solitude : the sun and moon,
The steadfast stars, the everlasting hills,
The everchanging clouds, and wandering waves.
When o'er the sea, with frolic footstep light,
The sweet Spring Wind, returning, sang, "Behold,
Back am I come with far-off-gather'd gifts,
New hopes I bring thee, and another year,
Believe, endeavour, and begin once more!"
May after May, he shudderingly oped
The downy casket in whose depths lay hid
A year's desire, and brought his treasure forth,
And spread it in the sun, and braved the chance
Of blighting chills and scorching heats, and fought
And wrestled for the rapture of success.
And January after January
Found the frail athlete stricken, overthrown,

Aspiration.

And prostrate, but with an unvanquisht will
Waiting the moment to begin again.

Transformation.

His crag was a king's castle : and he, too,
Dreaming of kingliness, had dream'd himself
Into a king ; tenacious of his rights,
Resolute, royal-hearted, lofty, strong,
Far-seeing, patient, vigilant, tho' still
Nor gold nor purple his, nor robe nor crown.

Induration.

As ductile as the bee-made yellow wax
The yellow gold is, by the craftsman curved
Into that glittering circlet : and more soft
In substance than the flesh of new-born babes
The little Tyrian fish, whose lustrous blood
Brightens the wool that leaves Tarentum's looms
Or Sidon's vats to deck the pomp of kings :
But hard they make, and all inflexible,
The soul that claims the purple and the gold.
The Poppy had his dream. To him that dream

Was Space, that dream was Time. He reckon'd not
The ages. He beheld the sea immense,
And knew it bounded. In himself he felt
The immensity of unfulfill'd desire,
And knew it boundless. Neither small nor great
The world to him, nor long nor short the time.
A dream hath no beginning and no end.

Concentration.

One day, a sound of voices, and a noise
Of hammers. The bare rock's bruised granite shriek'd
Beneath the grinding crowbar: and a shade,
Cast from the sudden image of a man,
Fell o'er the dreaming flower. Above it stood
The form of one who, meditating, lean'd
Upon his staff, that was a measuring rod.
The Poppy trembled, for he recognized
The presence of a god. Within him woke
Memories that long had slumber'd, and he call'd,
"Phantasos! Phantasos!" In feign'd surprise,

Pilgram, while building the Island Palace, discovers the Poppy clinging to the rock; and is recognised by the Dream-flower as Phantasos.

Dissembling his design, the god replied,
"Ha, dost thou know me, Mekon? Prithee say,
Pale keeper of the secret of the past,
What dost thou here, where never man hath been?
I am the Herald of Humanity.
'Twill follow me anon: and then begins
The good old comedy my touching up
Makes always new, with transformation-scenes
Fantastical, and fooleries perform'd
By Youth and Age, with Common Sense for clown.
Long while it is since I myself have heard
The name whereby my fellow-gods once hail'd,
And thou again dost hail me. To this crag
What god hath chain'd thee? No Prometheus thou,
Poor little nursling of Persephonè!"

To which the Dreamer appeals for restoration to the lost happiness of his former state.

"Persephonè!" the startled Poppy sigh'd,
"Persephonè! Ah, tell me, Phantasos,
May I no more behold her? Bear me back
To that lost kingdom whence, I know not how,

Nor why, nor when, I wander'd up to earth!
Was it thy whisper, or some other voice,
Beguil'd to its betrayal my desire?"
But the god answer'd, "Dreamer, ne'er have I
Beguiled thee, or betray'd. Within thyself
Deep sunken lies the kingdom thou hast lost,
And in thyself the kingdom thou would'st gain.
Thee from the world around thee I released.
The world thou seekest is within thee. Fool,
Seek it no more where thou shalt find it not!"
"Mock me not!" sigh'd the Poppy. "What I want
I have not. All that in myself I find
Is but the promise of it. Give me thou,
What thou alone of all the gods canst give,
Promise fulfill'd! Give me my robe and crown!"
"Who promised thee," said Phantasos, "the robe
And crown thou cravest?" And the Dream-flower sigh'd,
"Favonius." "Fool, to trust him!" said the god.
"A promise is a word, a word a breath,

wherein the contemplation of his own conceptions was a delight unimpaired by any desire to release those conceptions in the effect produced by them on others. But this prayer is rejected by the god, who repudiates the authorship of the change attributed to his influence. The Poppy then invokes the aid of Phantasos towards the attainment of his desires.

The god, after deriding

the inordinate ambition of this frail creature

And a breath nothing!" "Nay," the Poppy laugh'd,
"I trust Necessity. For crown and robe
I need not more than robe and crown need me.
Who else can wear them as their worth deserves?"
"O strength in weakness!" Phantasos exclaim'd.
"Thine is life's secret. Ever as thou art
Stay, little one! Dream on for evermore,
And be thyself a sempiternal joy
Dream'd by the sleeping earth! But crave not thou
Gifts that are curses. What are robe and crown
To thee, King Lackland?" "Listen!" said the Flower,
"Nor in thy thoughts degrade me, King of Thought!

(an ambition which the Poppy defends and justifies).

For him that feels and knows himself a king
There is a kingdom, wheresoe'er it be.
And were his kingdom in the deep sea sunk,
It would arise, its monarch to receive,
Or were his kingdom hung between the horns
Of the high moon, and frozen fast to them,
It would descend, his summons to obey,

Soon as to rule it, crown'd and robed, he came.
I know not where for me my kingdom waits,
But that for me 'tis waiting well I know."
Silent above the Poppy Pilgram bent.
There was a glory on his gracious brows,
A fire in his unfathomable eyes.
At last he lifted up his face, and raised
Enraptured hands to heaven, and laugh'd, "Dull lords
Of my renounced Olympus! you that rest
In unsurprised serenity, look down
And blush that you should ever have despair'd
Of this brisk world! Thrice blessèd be the day
When I remain'd behind you! For where else
Such creatures for my subjects could I find?
Even in this little flower what force of will!
And in the innumerable wills that throng
The cramm'd earth's ever-teeming thoroughfares
What force of folly! Dear, thou motley world,
Dear to my doting heart, from mouse to man,

Is constrained toadmire a faith so strong, in a frame so slight.

And, contemplating the incongruities of mortal life, in all its forms, Imagination assumes the character of Humour.

Are all thy passionate progeny, who bait,
With their own treacherous imaginings
The empty traps that life to catch them sets!
Never, wild children of the wilful earth,
Will I desert you! Never shall you lack
Mine unsuspected presence! Tho' disguised
I go among you, under every mask,
In every garb, in every age of time,
And every realm that, roll'd thro' day and night,
This wheeling orb spins round its frozen poles,
Antics and merryandrews all of you,
I claim you for mine own, and I am yours!"

Season your admiration for a while. —HORATIO.

X.

THE CROWN.

No vapour veil'd the crimson-bosom'd West,
Nor any cloudlet prematurely closed
The last bright moment of the long bright day.
But, lingering not to flush grey after-hours
With faded fires, the glory at its best
And brightest vanish'd; leaving the calm void
Quietly colourless, as life's smooth face
Of sober circumstance when love withdraws
The glow that quicken'd it. 'Tis then, dim age
Comes unresisted, overshadowing earth,
Re-opening heaven, and o'er the lone repose
Of its own darkness sheds a tender gleam

Of cold tranquillity. Even so, forthwith
The sudden night, with all her stars distinct,
And her pure moonlight's spacious plenitude
Of pallid splendour, wrapt the world, serene
And luminous as the slumber of a god.

The Crown Princess is left alone with the Crown.

Beyond the dreaded morrow of that night
Lurk'd throngs of unfamiliar faces, strange
New paths untrodden, and days that nevermore
In Diadema's island home should find
Their dawning welcomed by the heart of a child.
The King, her father, leaving her, had left
His crown behind him, with a tremulous hand
Pointed towards it, waved above her head
A voiceless benison, and, murmuring
"To-morrow!" sorrowfully stolen away,
With that least sorrowful of all farewells.

Pilgram de corond.

Then suddenly before her Pilgram stood.
His face was solemn as the face of Fate,
And his voice stern and serious as the voice

Of sad Experience. "Maiden," said the god,
"Yon crown will find its royal resting-place
Upon thy brows to-morrow. Mark it well!
It is a traveller that is never tired.
The path it travels is above the heads
Of princes. Every footstep is a king.
When he that wore it last is dead, time turns
His body to a sceptred statue. Fixt
Forever on the road that statue rests
So far as the dead king's last footstep reach'd;
And there its monumental image points
The progress of the nations, whose long march
Is measured by those statues that were kings.
The People occupies the plain of the world:
Kings occupy its summits. Multiform
As well as multitudinous, and made
Of metamorphoses, the People is:
From hour to hour 'tis other than it was:
Youth imperceptibly effaces age:

In a few years the People hath replaced
The People, without violence, without
Apparent movement : never may one say
On this day, or on that, the People died,
At one time, or another, it was born :
Living and dying simultaneously,
Its life is pass'd in dying, and it dies
In giving birth unto itself : the grave
Its birth-bed is : its cradle is a bier.
Kings arrive singly, and one after one :
Kings have successors : to the People time
Grants but contemporaries : 'tis a crowd :
Few of that crowd their own forefathers know
But all know the forefathers of their Kings.
It is because the People's memory
Of its begetters is a memory merged
In crown'd paternities of princely lines,
That Kings the fathers of their People be.
This law reverses nature's common rule :

It finds the fathers by the children made.
The Crown is sexless: those it rests upon
Are neither male nor female: each is more
Than man or woman: all of them are Kings.
The People is the foliage of mankind:
Its life the branches clothes, and its decay
The soil enriches: blown by every wind,
The People fluctuates, perishes, revives.
Kings are the trunks. The tree is chronicled
Not by its foliage: as the trunk, the tree:
So many rings are reckon'd to the trunk,
And to the tree as many years. To prove
Its own antiquity the People counts
The number of its Kings. From sire to son
All Kings are brothers: and the youngest born
Hath elder brothers that are centuries old.
On summits only crowns repose; and each
To all that is beneath it—all that serves
For its support—significance imparts:

The blossom crowns the summit of the stem,
The snow the summit of the mountain crowns,
The King the summit of the nation. Man
Would be deprived of grandeur if his life
Had nothing grand whereon to place a crown,
And nothing grander will it ever have
Than a grand King."

The god's speech is, for the first time, unintelligible to the child. But at his summons interpreters arrive.

Thus spake the solemn god,
Oracular. But his mysterious speech
The maiden understood not. Then he touch'd
Her brow, and breathed on it, and it became
Throng'd with strange inmates. All her little head
Humm'd like a mighty house made murmurous
By a panic-stricken crowd. Doors oped and shut,
Swift footsteps sped down passages and stairs,
And eager hands flung wide the windows all.
Parts of herself they seem'd that some bad news
Had disconcerted, and in haste they sought
Escape at every issue. Left behind,

She felt them pass, and saw, or seem'd to see,
Their fleeting forms, and heard, or seem'd to hear,
Their plaintive calls, but chill'd to the heart's core
By the cold seizure of a tyrannous trance
Stood slack and dumb. And round her all the while,
Rising and falling, sometimes in a storm
Of lamentation and admonishment,
Sometimes low lulling to a tremulous hush
All but the lone appeal of one thin voice
That thrill'd her thought with poignant music, made
By mute vibrations on spiritual chords
Intenser than all audible sound, they sang—

Song without sound.

King's Daughter, King's Daughter, beware
Of the world where thou goest! For there
Not a pleasure there is but it turns to a pain,
Nor a sweetness that hides not a snare.
Child whom we chose for our Queen, have we clung to
thee

Closer than childhood, yet clasp'd thee in vain?
Dear and long due is the debt thou dost owe us!
Wealth we have flung to thee, sciences sung to thee,
Mingling with all that is purest in heaven
All that is fairest on earth, we have given
Gift upon gift to thee. Safe they belong to thee.
Give them not thou to the hands that would stain,
Desecrate, shatter, and thanklessly throw us
Our gifts back again!

*

Solo Allegro. The Sweetness of a flower in the soul of a child.

To follow thee, I scaled thy sea-girt tower,
And craggy bower.
To follow thee was all my life's emprize.
To follow thee, I braved the storm-blast's power,
The lightning's lash, tho' but a feeble flower,
Rootbound, and rock'd by Summer's faintest sighs.
'Twas love upheld, and help'd me, hour by hour,
To rise and rise.
To follow thee, I climb'd the gateless wall,

And leapt the bridgeless moat. To follow thee,
Secure where even the wild goat fears to fall,
I clung, and swung, and camp'd my blithe buds all
On rocks that house not even a hermit bee.
One happy morn, in at thy lattice peeping,
I found thee sleeping,
And tapp'd, and tapp'd, till thou in shy amazement
Didst wake, and listen, and fling wide the casement,
And lo! I faced thee,
Trembling all over, faint with having found thee!
Thou didst lean o'er me, and mine arms went round
thee,
And I embraced thee!
Clapping thy hands for gladness, thou did'st cry
"What, is it thou?
Madcap, how could'st thou dare to climb so high?
Look down below!
Think, had st thou fallen?" "Many a fall had I,"
Laughing, I answer'd, and made haste to show

Where down the high crag's slippery pedestal
My blossoms, trembling over an abyss,
Dropp'd bloom on bloom. "And thus do blossoms fall,"
I laughed, "like kiss on kiss!"
Then didst thou understand me: and the whole
Of my heart's secret, filling all thy frame,
Thro' thy soft eyes slid into thy sweet soul,
Where mine own soul a thought of thine became.
Deep in thine eyes that thought may still be seen,
Tho' by thyself it be unnoticed quite,
Nor canst thou utter it. Let others guess!
Some call me Grace, some call me Charm. I ween
Blest will he be who one day wins the right
To know me by my true name, Tenderness!

Choral. *King's Daughter, King's Daughter, beware*
Of the world where thou goest! For there
Other gifts other givers will give thee, and fine
Tho' each gift, in its core is a care.

We are kings, and our kingdoms were tax'd for thy
treasure:
Of our sunbeams we built thee a palace of pleasure:
With our moonbeams we lit thee a shrine:
And the songs of the birds, and the sweets of the
flowers,
Sung and breathed in beatified worlds that are ours,
Never counting the cost, never stinting the measure,
We bestow'd on a world that was thine.

I have no name. For they that know me best
Know how to name me not. The nightingale
Sings me when Summer nights are silentest,
And the stars tremble, listening to her tale.
Soft Melancholy's sweetest child am I,
Sweeter than joy. I hover between song
And silence. There is smiling in my sigh,
And sighing in my smile. A thought among
Thy thoughts, I wander, as a wind thro' flowers,

And only by their tremors canst thou tell
My secret influence on thy silent hours.
Yet dost thou know me, child, and know me well.

*

Choral. *King's Daughter, King's Daughter, beware*
Of the world where thou goest! For there
Is all mirth a mirage, ever mocking the drouth
Of a desert deceitfully fair.
In thy soul was the storehouse we sought
For our gifts, gather'd out of the East
And the West and the North and the South:
And a gladness we breathed in thy breast,
And a music we gave to thy mouth,
And to each of thy gazes a star.
Not a gift that we gave, but hath brought
From the kingdoms whereof we are kings
To thy spirit a loveliness, wrought
Thro' the loom of its rich reveries
Into feeling, and fancy, and thought.

For the charm interwoven with these
Hath the spell of all glamours that are
In the magic whose mystery clings
To the azure of summits and seas
In the deeps of the distance afar;
To the sound of low-murmuring trees,
Lyric birds, and melodious springs;
To the throb in the rose;
To the violet's breath on the breeze:
To the freshness that floats from Morn's opaline car;
To the glory that burdens Noon's opulent wings;
To the world of red wonders whose wizardry glows
Thro' the glimmering gates of the sunset ajar;
And the twilight's repose.
Child, we are kings of all beautiful things,
And thy heart was the home that we chose!

Fainter upon the incorporeal sense
Of her stretch'd spirit, from receding spheres,
The voices fell. Immoveable and mute
Stood Diadema, with white features fixt
Fast as the dead leaves on a frozen pool,
Arms outthrust, hands uplifted, lips and eyes
Wide open. Rhoda at the King's approach
Had left her: at the coming of the god
The King departed: and the god himself,
Soon as his finger on her forehead laid
The troublous spell of its entrancing touch,
Had suddenly vanisht into viewless air.

Sick almost to doomsday with eclipse. —HORATIO.

XI.

THE CORONATION.

Her mood will needs be pitied.
—HORATIO.

ALONE, as she had never been before,
Alone and conscious of her loneliness,
And by that consciousness from head to foot
Fill'd with a freezing fear, the maiden stood.
Pilgram was gone, and gone her father: gone
Her childhood's old glad careless confidence
In life's untested welcomes: gone the time
When round her, like a rich land's prodigal soil
In a soft clime, the world with promise teem'd;
When all things said "Thou may'st!" and none "Thou must!"
When every song-bird caroll'd, "Life is love,

And love is joy!" when all the hopeful air
Was glowing with benignant prophecies,
And every leaf and blossom laugh'd, "Rejoice!"
When even tears were sweet as summer rains,
And melancholy's sorrowfullest mood
Only a kind of shadowy happiness.
All these were gone: and, taking to itself
Usurp'd possession of their empty place,
Her crown remain'd. The loveliness of youth,
Itself so loving, yearns to be beloved
Ere yet it finds the loved one, and youth's dreams
Are all dim-throng'd with amorous presences
That smile and beckon. But, while fervid steps
Their smiles pursue, Fate's labyrinth unperceived
Round the lured victim, coiling, shuts. And then,
When happiness hath grown a habit, hope
A faith, and love the element of both,
Out of the heart of the maze her oracle speaks

The wiles wherewith Nature wheedles Youth to do her will.

The Inevitable No; that, whether breathed
Light as the whispers of a sleeping child,
Or loud as thunder peal'd, all promise turns
To prohibition, puckers to a frown
Earth's smile, strikes sunless the bright vault of heaven,
And famine-smites the fruitful tracts of time.
The loved one's coming tears, not kisses, greet;
And the poor heart's forbidden welcome faints
Unutter'd upon lips that wail "Farewell!"
Voices that laugh'd, "Rejoice!" exclaim, "Renounce!"
Along the desert air, where no bird sings,
A pining wind laments, "Life is not love,
But duty, and love is not joy, but pain!"
And all things say, "Thou must!" and none, "Thou may'st!"
Change comes with age: but it is we that change,
And not the world's conditions. Our desires
Dwindle: our will deliberately shifts
Its chosen mark, exerting none the less

Prohibition is coeval with Paradise; where all said "Yes" till Prohibition spoke. The voice of it followed man's footsteps into the wilderness, which then became his world: a world filled with the terrors of that voice. But of its many mandates one only is inevitable. All prohibitions upon Sin man has evaded. The prohibition upon Happiness he cannot evade. This is the Inevitable No; which transfers Freedom, with all its felicities, from the realm of Reality to that of the Ideal.

Its liberty of choice: the shorten'd aim
Requites the slacken'd effort: from without
No enigmatic mandate disallows
Their free selection of the mark itself
To faculties retaining all their force:
And the slow years along the downward slope
Of compensated loss so softly lead
Life's gradual descent that, looking back,
Never at any time can age recall
The date of youth's departure. But this change
Comes otherwise, comes wholly unprepared,
Suddenly in the heyday of youth's heats,
When every pulse is fullest, every nerve
Most sensitive to pleasure and to pain.
It comes with the intolerable shock
Of the soul's first discovery of Fate's strength
And her own impotence: leaves all within
Unchanged, unweaken'd, and unreconciled
To the drear change of all without—the same

Wild energy of will, the same strong need
Of life and love, the same capacity
To feel, the same simplicity of faith
In pre-establisht harmonies between
Feeling and fact; but all at once no more
The same fair, welcoming, wide-open world
Of high and happy possibilities
Awaiting their possession. Chill eclipse
Descends on all. The reassuring smile
Of a benignant Providence departs,
And, in its stead, hangs everywhere the frown
Of some grim barbarous Demon Power that wills
And loves not, claiming for its dismal rites
The victim and the sacrifice. Even then,
Born brave, and nurtur'd upon nobleness,
The young heart (still too young to guess the worst
That Fate intends it), like a king dethroned,
Whose kingliness, even when unkingdom'd, clothes
Calamity itself with grace august,

Would fain devote its proud sublimities
Of feeling to the adornment of despair;
Feasting its famine upon sacrifice,
Slaking its fervid thirst of joys forbid
On torrents of inebriating tears,
Converting desolation to a dower,
Pain to an appanage, and wringing thus
The rapture of a high enthusiasm
Even from the cold grey helplessness of grief.
In vain! The Inevitable No denies
To unhappiness no less than happiness
The luxury of passion: and again
Out of the heart of the maze the oracle speaks:
"Not all at once, impulsive Child of Earth,
Nor once for all, thy sacrifice shall be!
But thou shalt mortify and mutilate
Thyself, piecemeal, on altars many and mean,
Little by little, to the end of life.
And when the equivalence of littleness

In suffering and enjoyment, good and ill,
Hath re-establisht life's lost harmonies
Of fact and feeling in a lower tone,
When the subservient spirit no longer craves
Aught that the common and convenient course
Of circumstance denies it, death shall loose
With sudden hand a bond grown tolerable,
Remove a burden lighten'd by long use,
And to the crippled pinions, that have lost
Their power to soar, set wide the narrow cage
Which shelter'd Custom's creature from the vague,
Wild, fearful, unfamiliar Infinite."

In captivity.

To Diadema in that frozen trance
Fate's Oracle had spoken its first word;
And round her crown's hard hollow circlet, husht
With horror, died away in a dumb void
The faint unanswer'd voices of the past.
But, thro' the silence of all others, sweet

The old song.

As Eden's nightingale when still the rose
Was thornless, one dear solitary voice
Of tenderest tone sang to her from afar,
Singing of love, and love's infinitudes
Of feeling. To a world of finite fact
Fetter'd, she heard it as a captive hears
Thro' prison grates, in some far foreign land,
A voice that calls him in his native tongue,
And at the extreme tether of his chain
Falls in vain effort to escape. A few
Short footsteps reach'd the limit of her power
To follow the sweet summons of that song.
Her crown still held in her unconscious hands,
Out thro' her chamber's unshut casement, drawn
As one that walks in dreams, she stagger'd. There,
Down in its rose-girt balcony she sank
Along her purple-pillow'd ivory couch,
Letting her crown into her listless lap
Sink unregarded also. Low, between

The moonlit blossoms of the balustrade,
Her drooping cheek on her clasp'd hands she lean'd,
And listen'd, sick at heart. A little breeze
Began to make a sighing trouble among
Those moonlit blossoms. Ever and anon
Fell o'er her, here a blossom, there a leaf;
And with the leaves and blossoms, as they fell,
Her tears fell too, thawing her frozen trance.
The distant voice sang on. But with its song
Another and a nearer voice, that breathed
Close at her ear importunate, interfused
Mysterious tones. It was the Poppy's voice,
Appealing to her for the crown he craved.
"Maiden," it whisper'd, "give thy crown to me,
With all its cares, and I will give thee love,
With all its joys!" And, as she listen'd, her heart
Swell'd fuller, and beat faster, and she felt
The lightening and the loosening of a load
Of ponderous impossibilities.

A singer far away, and a whisperer near at hand:

Whose combined influence affects the emancipation of the Captive Princess

The whisper of the Poppy, with its word
Of mystic promise, penetrating all
The music of Love's passionate psalm, became
More potent upon her spirit than the power
Of Fate's imperative oracle. A soul
Secure of happiness, in some high sphere
Of unassail'd serenity, she heard
Faint echoes of the Inevitable No
Falling far down a dim escaped abyss
Of evitable and evaded doom
That gaped beneath her, and their menace seem'd
Abortive as a dying beldam's curse.

And the union of two lovers.

Between her and the singer of the song
Whose music mingled with the lulling spells
Breathed by the Poppy, all distance disappear'd,
All separation ceased. The song itself,
Assuming personality, became
One with the singer, and the singer and she
One with each other; in whose oneness lived,

Reciprocally realized, the full
Felicitous actuality of all
The song but sang of—strength and tenderness,
Passion and purity, beyond the reach
Of ruinous time and rancorous circumstance,
In a transcendent everlasting dream
Of love united. From the maiden's lap
Down slid the crown the Poppy craved, and bruised
His goblin brow. Thence issued troops of dreams,
Whose giant power its weight uplifted, set
Its heavy splendours on his florid crest,
And with miraculous transmutation turn'd
Its dwindling golden hoop, and the small head
Beneath it, to a tawny capsule hard,
Encircled by the semblance of what they
Who are themselves but semblances of power
Wear for the symbol of it. From this hard
And tawny capsule leapt two lucid beads
That fell into the maiden's eyes. Her lids

Coronation of King Poppy.

Droop'd slowly, closing o'er them, and she slept.
Slept, and still sleeps: a maiden princess sleeping
For ever in a palace by the sea!

His kingdom's first visitant.

Over the sleeping maiden lightly stoop'd
King Poppy. Both her lidded eyes he kiss'd,
And whisper'd to her, "King's Daughter, enter in!
Enter the happy realm whereof thy hand
Hath crown'd me monarch! Here thy home behold!
Here shalt thou dwell forever beautiful,
Forever blest; and here forever thine
Those gifts shall be, the god who gave them hid
Deep in the innocent heart my power preserves
Stainless, and still unbroken: radiant forms,
The fields of Fancy roaming, crown'd with flowers
From faëry gardens gloriously adorn'd
By all the summers of the Golden Age;
Sweet thoughts that wander, sinless as the streams

That water'd Paradise, thro' worlds as fair
And far away as Paradise itself;
Bright tendernesses ever flowing from
Unfathomable founts of sympathy;
Beauty that time hath blemish'd not, and love
That life hath not dishonour'd. Safe and pure
As dwells the starry essence of the dew
Shut in the unsullied bosom of a rose,
Sleep, maiden, sleep! To thee shall woeful eyes
And weary hearts for consolation turn,
When slumber locks eyelashes tired with tears
On cheeks still wet with weeping, and sad souls
Are guided blindfold to the Land of Dreams.
Here, as, imploring refuge from the world,
My realm and thine their weary steps approach,
Do thou life's wayworn travellers welcome home,
And lead them to the regions of their rest!"

The Shepherd, on a moonlit peak, his song

Unanswer'd, and his soul in wild suspense,
Stood waiting for a voice that ne'er till then
Had fail'd to answer, in a thousand tones
Of infinitely varied tenderness
For ever new, the selfsame question fond,
With the same fond assurance, "I am thou!"
Strange and uncommon seems to each in turn
His own first portion of life's common pain:
But cruellest is the pang of the surprise
When what hath been a long-familiar sense
Of undefinable felicity,
Whose beatific influence erewhile
In some young heart made hovering music heard,
And, soft as sunny haze at morning, mantled

The soul's pursuits, whether in life or art, are preceded by an ideal possession of the object pursued. For to the soul pure perception is in the nature of undisturbed possession: nor can she seek what she does not miss, or miss what she has not known. But this state of the soul is simply receptive; and the conditions of her physical tenement render it necessarily transient. The cessation of it is followed by a state of unrest; wherein the sense of missed possession begets the need of attainment, and therewith passion, the agent of that need. The first is a state of passive enjoyment; the second, one of painful activity. Attainment, however, extinguishes passion in the possession of the object attained; and in relation to that object the soul again finds rest: what the faculties employed by her present as an act of acquisition, being to the soul herself an act of recovery. Perception, preceding desire; desire, compelling attainment; and attainment, restoring perception; these three states comprise the history of what his work is to the artist, his love to the lover, his system to the philosopher; in so far, at least, as the Imaginative Power is concerned with the development, in the individual, of art, philosophy, or love.

That one poor heart's whole habitable world
In fervid veils that all harsh features hid,
And all dark hollows fill'd with golden cloud,
A single miserable moment turns
Into a definite and acute despair,
Crying aloud, "My name is Love! Secure
Within thy spirit's penetralian shrine
I lurk'd unchallenged, till at last I learn'd
Its inmost secrets. Thou, who all the while
Didst neither know thyself, nor them, nor me,
By every other name that is not mine
Hast call'd me; and in many a borrow'd form
Upon thy heart I, unforbidden, fed
Till I gain'd strength to break it. Know me now,
For what I am! Love, stronger than before,
Being full-grown, craving more nourishment.
I hunger. I am starving. I am wild.
My power is pitiless, my need immense,

And thou art at my mercy. Give me food
Give me thy heart to gnaw, thy life to rend
And ravage! In return, one gift have I
Still left to give thee, tho' all else be gone,
The dreadful gift of Knowledge-known-too-late!
Thou shalt not ever hear her voice again,
And thou dost love her. Thou shalt never hold
Her hand in thine, nor press thy lips to hers,
And thou dost love her. Never shalt thou gaze
Upon her face, save in a hopeless dream,
And thou dost love her. Thou hast loved her long,
And didst not know it. Thou hast lost her now,
And, knowing thou hast lost her, knowest too
How dearly thou didst love her, and dost love!"

This was the only voice the Shepherd heard.
It came to him from his own frighten'd heart,
Startling and terrible, as at dead of night,

When feasted revellers rest, and streets are still,
Thro' some soft slumbering city that hath been
Betray'd while it caroused, a trumpet sounds,
Blown by the invader, and a wild voice cries,
"Awake! The foe is in the citadel,
The gods are stolen away, and all is lost!"
And he awoke out of his broken dream
Of undefended happiness, and sat
Forlorn among the ruins of it, and felt
That something, which till then had been the soul
Of all things else, was gone; and nothing else
The loss of it had left alive in him
But a blind, voiceless, desolate desire
Far from his undone self to fly away;
Athwart the world's indifferent darkness chasing
Evasive echoes of a silenced song
Whose distant singer's inmost soul to his
Had all its secrets in that song outpour'd.

The passionate Pilgrim.

His little hut upon the upland lawns
He left, and all his flocks and herds forsook.
His loins he girt, and from the stony ridge
Rush'd, like a mountain cataract sudden rains
Have swollen, upon the valleys with a cry.
Flying, his pastoral pipe he flung away,
For broken was the music of his life,
And flung away his shepherd crook, for all
His shepherdings were ended. Flint and briar
Stay'd not his flight, nor the dividing sea.
Into its moaning deeps he plunged, and swam
Dauntless as young Leander, tho' for him
No torch was kindled, and no Hero watch'd.
Strong was the violent strait that roll'd between
The mainland and the islet crags whence safe
The song he miss'd had found erewhile its way.
But to him, seeking thro' the waters wild
That lost song's hidden birthplace, way was none
Safe from the hundred thousand hands of Death,

Obstacles oppose his pilgrimage, and perils beset it:

That snatch'd, and clutch'd, and slipp'd, and snatch'd again.

Headlong at last upon a savage beach
The breaker hurl'd him senseless, but anon
Suck'd back, and toss'd from roaring ridge to ridge
Of smoky surf, till in its strenuous lap
The tide-wave's southward-streaming current caught,
And roll'd him round the rocky isle, and laid
His body, bleeding, bruised, but breathing still,
In a soft bay beneath the summer moon.
There, blowing over myrtle bowers, sweet airs
Breathed on his swoon, and waked it. He arose
As one that, having perish'd on the rack,
Revives in Paradise. Around him bloom'd
The Eden of his dreams, and o'er him smiled
The heaven of all his hopes. A giant crag,
Cleft from the rocky root of it in twain,
Loom'd imminent above him. One huge peak

But chance, favouring the vague direction of his efforts, brings him close to the goal when he is least conscious of having approached it.

The stupor which follows protracted and seemingly abortive struggle is a period of unperceived refreshment: and, reviving from it, he at last sees clear before him the requital of all his pains, in the living embodiment of a never-relinquished ideal, and the perfect beauty of its form.

(The highest but least inaccessible)
Rough with wild shrubs and pendulous parasites,
Held, poised in heaven, upon its aëry top
The large round moon. The other and lesser limb
Of that deep-riven rampart, from its base
Low-branching, pedestall'd a shadowy pile
Of masonry fantastically heap'd
In terrace upon terrace superposed.
Wall overtopping wall, and dome from dome
Emergent in a maze of pinnacles,
All unapproachable. From whose dim midst
Uprose a single supereminent tower;
And, in the highest story of it set,
A spacious lamp-lit window, balconied
Broad at the vase with golden balustrade
O'er-clamber'd by the revelling rose, shone bright.
The glory, from that window pouring, paused
Upon the rose-girt balcony, and wove
A reverential aureole round about

One image—hers, the lady of the isle,
In her lone loveliness. The Shepherd's star
Stay'd there, above the recompensing shrine
Of his wild pilgrimage : for there at last
Song's tenderest importunities were blest
With all the gladness of a granted prayer,
And love's most passionate prophecies fulfill'd.
His limbs were sore and shaken, soak'd and torn
His garments, but no pain nor weariness
Survived that vision. Deep beatitude
Bathed his delighted spirit, and a new sense
Of life, from suffering suddenly released,
Flutter'd blithe wings within him like a bird.
With nimble foot and dexterous hand he climb'd
The higher cliff, whose tangled thickets creak'd
And crackled where from branch to branch he swung
Swift as a stormy wind : beneath his foot
The mountain's stony litter, loosen'd, sprang,
And down its craggy channels roaring roll'd

With faculties quickened by confidence in the perception of an attainable end, he again aspires.

Into unseen abysses : snaky roots,
Tugg'd by his snatching hand, within its grasp
Snapp'd : but safe onward sped the mountaineer ;
Such salient springs of lightness in his heart,
Uplifting and upholding him, impell'd
His passionate course. The overwhelming Pan,
Whose hidden presence fill'd those shaggy heights
With sudden horrors and bewilderments,
Dismay'd him not ; nor could earth's sullen power
Subordinate to its down-dragging stress
The ascendant spirit that ethercalized
His earthly frame, wherein the fire of life
Burn'd with a self-consuming brightness, fann'd
To finer fervours by the breath of love.

And, reaching the highest point of possible achievement, finds

At last, with nought between him and the moon
Save the dark-purple ether's breathing dome,
He stood elate. Thence, gazing, he beheld
Close underneath him, nor beyond his reach

More than a few short arm-lengths—lone, as dwells
The little glow-worm in its own soft gleam
Enhalo'd,—on a lamp-lit ivory couch
Gem-crusted, purple-cushion'd, girt about
By a broad golden balcony, and embower'd
Among rose-blossoms (she, a rose in bud)
—Among profuse rose-blossoms and among
Husht leaves embower'd, where all around her throbb'd
Night's palpitant purities and poesies
Of starlight, stillness, darkness, solitude,
And summer (a poem of purity herself)
—The maiden Princess sleeping. Snowy white Repose.
Shone her soft throat and lucid shoulder bare,
And snowy white, from breast to ankle fine,
In wavy slopes her sweeping vesture flow'd
Along her faultless form. One sweet small foot
From the plain fold that hid its fellow peep'd
In jewell'd slipper, sparkling to the moon :

One slender hand above her fallen crown
Hover'd, a drooping flower : the other propp'd
Her pale cheek, pillow'd on its rosy palm.
Above the purple-cushion'd couch, and close
To the still maiden's tender ear, pale-lipp'd,
With writhing neck, in thin green garment clad,
Like a wan goblin bent beneath the weight
Of Elfland's gifts (his unawakening hand
Upon the pillow of its darling child
Must lay in haste ere morn's return) low crouch'd
A great white poppy ; and from its luminous core,
As from the unseen flame of a wizard lamp,
Veil'd splendours all her slumbrous face suffused.
Her vagrant tresses, from the braided pearl
That bound them, loosen'd by low-breathing airs,
Wander'd in floating ripples upon the wave
That heaved her virgin bosom. The starr'd heavens,
Fill'd with unfathomable mystery, hung
Above her and about her, glimmering,

Trembling, and whispering, as tho' their winds
Were lull'd, their depths of lustrous darkness all
With odours laden, and their mazy stars
In myriads kindled, but to minister
To the secluded charm of her repose.
He, too, sole human witness of a sight
So wildly dream'd of and so dearly won,
Hung o'er her, almost touch'd her—and yet knew
That still 'twixt him and her was an abyss!

He attains; and in the attainment, perishes:

O'er that abyss, the one last hindrance left
Between love's indefatigable course
And its complete attainment, an abyss
So narrow, yet to foot of mortal man
Impassable as is the little grave
Whose gap uncross'd keeps Earth and Heaven apart,
The Shepherd stretch'd imploring arms, embraced
The bounteous vision, from his mountain ledge
Leapt desperately down; and at her feet,

Whose loveliness his life had from afar
But perishing, is saved. Divined and sought, death laid him lovingly ;
Suffering his wounded head to sink and rest
On her sweet bosom, folding round her close
His dying arms, and in libation pouring
(To consecrate their bridal bower) the blood
Of the brave heart whose strong life's passionate stream,
No longer pent, to its dear Naïad bore
The last fond tribute of adoring love.
Red gems it added to her royal crown,
And the pale Poppy guarding that great prize
The investiture of King Poppy. It dyed deep crimson. So the Poppy gain'd
The kingly symbols he had coveted,
A purple mantle, and a golden crown.
But Sorrow gave him one, and Death the other.

His Kingdom's second visitant. Over the dying boy King Poppy bent,
Beneath his closing eyelids softly dropp'd
Two lucid beads, and whisper'd, "Enter in,

Poor shepherd boy who loved a monarch's child!
Enter the blissful realm whereof thy blood
Hath robed me king, and here in safety dwell,
Forever loving, and forever loved!
Here shall thy life be great and glorious, thou
Who wast on earth poor, nameless, and obscure!
Hither, my happy kingdom to adorn,
O herdsman's son, bear with thee unimpair'd
The single treasure of thy true young heart!
That love elsewhere impossible, elsewhere
Hopeless, shall here be hail'd the only love
Perfectly possible, the only one
Perfectly true, the only one that lasts
Fervid and fresh forever. King henceforth
Thou art, and bravely kingdom'd; for no less
Than kings are all my subjects, and to thee
The first and fairest of mine own wide realms
Is given in kingly guerdon. Here shall come,
Thy royal kinship claiming, the scorn'd souls

Of poets who, like thee, have nought but love
To give away, and give it all ungrudged
Tho' unrequited—save when life is o'er.
Young Shepherd King, thy maiden bride embrace!
Thy shepherd boy, young Maiden Queen, console!
Reign happy, reign together, sovereigns both
Of Dreamland's youngest province! People it
With lovelinesses rescued from a world
That loves not, solacing its paths with song
Elsewhere unheard! Call hither from afar
The loving, and the lonely, and the lost,
And lead them to the regions of their rest!"

XII.

THE CONSTITUTION.

RECKON'D events to the unreckon'd end
Fate urges, foiling forethought. When the day
Prophetic hopes or prescient fears foretold
Is come at last, it finds us unprepared,
Or else in all our preparations wrong.
Vainly upon the Present's private stage
The action of the Future is rehearsed:
Soon as the prompter's final call-bell sounds,
And the great curtain rises, ten to one
That all the players have forgot their parts.
Mylady's pincushion, tho' planted thick
With pins of all sorts daily, pinless proves

Just when the important ball-dress is put on,
And Mylord's coach kept waiting at the door.
You hear your regiments are undermann'd,
Only the morning after war's declared:
Not till the men are well upon their march,
You learn your soldiers have not shoes enough.
Battles are never won, but always lost,
By something, all things turn on, turning out
So as to overturn the best design
Turn'd over by the wisest heads before.
All premature, the long-expected comes.
Scarce plann'd, your public charter is pro-
claim'd,
And ere the first word's writ the last is read.

Public Expectation

The night when royally King Poppy assumed
Serene possession of his promised realm
Was follow'd by a memorable morn.
To greet that morn the streets of Diadum

Were gay with flowers, the roofs with flags, and blithe
With pealing joybells all the belfries clang'd ;
While round the palace flocks of loyal folk
Were struggling with each other for a sight
Of something which not one of them could see.
For it had been officially made known
That the Crown Princess would this morn attain
Her full majority. Confused reports,
Moreover, had been current, that the King
Would probably soon after abdicate
In favour of his daughter—might, indeed,
Some hinted, take occasion of the day
Her Royal Highness came of age, to announce
This long-surmised intention. But the hour
When the Crown Princess ought to have appear'd
Upon a balcony was pass'd, and still
Of her approach no bellowing batteries gave
The appointed signal to the drums and fifes

Disappointed.

Ready since dawn to strike up "Old King Cole."
The gunners, tired, beside their linstocks stood.
Their matches had been lighted long ago,
And every one of them was half burnt out.
Noticing this, the General in Command,
With his unfailing practical good sense,
Sent to the arsenal for fresh supplies
Of matches. But by singular ill luck
The country had been several years at peace;
And the last batch of matches, made in haste
When the last war was over, had been all
Used up in fireworks to commemorate
The seventieth anniversary of the day
The King recover'd from the chicken-pox.
The Aide-de-camp, however, who was charged
On this occasion with the delicate task
Of fetching matches from an arsenal
Completely matchless, recognized how much
The national artillery would lose

Deficiency in the military stores.

In public estimation if it fail'd
To make a noise. So, clapping spur forthwith
Into his charger, off he rode full speed
Till, round the corner, in the nick of time
He reach'd the next apothecary's shop,
And a forced requisition of pastilles
Made on the premises. For these he paid
By drafts upon the Extraordinary Fund
For "MEASURES TO-BE-TAKEN-WHEN-TOO-LATE."
That Chapter of the Budget was, he knew,
Better provided for than all the rest—
Thanks to the forethought and experience
Of the War Minister. The Aide-de-camp,
In consequence of this exploit, received
The Order of "The Jumping Cow and Moon,"
By means of which he jump'd above the heads
Of fifteen senior officers. Fourteen
Were married, and the fifteenth officer
Had sixteen children. The dragoon was seen

Brilliant exploit of a young officer.

Merit rewarded

To the detriment of Seniority.

Returning from the apothecary's shop
With headlong haste, his horse in a white sweat :
'Twas also noticed that he lost no time
In handing to the Chief Staff Officer
A packet, which that officer received
With the unmoved composure that betrays
A deep anxiety. But all surmise
About the inaction of the troops was stopp'd
By the appearance of a personage
Not mention'd in the programme. Suddenly
The Master of the Royal Printing House
Arrived, preceded by the Fire Brigade
With ladders, and the Engineers with pots
And brushes : who placarded all the walls
And posts, for miles and miles, with spacious sheets
Of paper, printed in colossal type.
And at the head of each huge poster, black
In a vast blank, as in its desert stands
The giant Sphinx, stood one enormous word.

The apparition comes.— HORATIO.

That word was—

CONSTITUTION!

Under it

Follow'd, low down, in lesser capitals

"WE DIADUMMIANUS"—(These two words

In every royal proclamation came

Invariably first. The public eye

Noticed, however, with surprise that here

The next two of the sentence that began

"WE DIADUMMIANUS" were "THE LAST.")

The proclamation then continued thus,

"CONSIDERING"—

But everybody now,

Without consideration, knows by heart

The general principles and special points

Consider'd at considerable length

In that great document; whose text contain'd

Numerous guarantees, proclaim'd in terms

These hands are not more like. HORATIO.

By numerous Modern States adopted since
Verbatim. Everything was guaranteed,
Except the guaranteeing guarantee
Of all the guarantees that constitute
A Model Constitution.

Still life.

When the King,
With heavy heart and hesitating step,
To fetch his daughter back to Diadum
That morning sought her island bower, he found
The maiden sleeping. On her bosom glow'd
A scarlet poppy, like the signet set
Upon a princely secret. Robed in white,
Smiling asleep she lay; and from her soft
Half-open lips melodious murmurings
Floated, as from the petals of a flower
That in its happy bosom hides the bee.
The porphyry table, on whose coverlet (rich
With silver brede enwrought) his hand had left
The unloved crown that was to have been hers,

Some magic of the midnight hours had turn'd
Into what seem'd a rose-red marble tomb ;
About the base, in milk-white groups emboss'd,
The progress of a pastoral idyll wound,
And as it went its simple love-tale told
In silence to the silent solitude ;
Upon the top, supine (a life-like form,
But in the stillness of its sculptured grace
Fairer than life, and on its marble lips
The perdurable sweetness of a smile
Sweeter than young Endymion's slumbering
In the embrace of the enamour'd moon)
Reposed the image of a shepherd boy,
Whose face was to the maiden tenderly
Turn'd, as her own to him. Beside the couch
Dame Rhoda sat ; and in her wither'd hands
One little hand she held, whose fingers fine
The dreaming child had curl'd confidingly
Within her nursing clasp, as if to say,

Dispersion and migration of Ballad Song, which preserves the dreams of Childhood in the traditional utterances of Eld.

"Wake me not! I am happy. All is well."
Into her listening ear the child's warm lips
Were murmuring stories of her own sweet dreams;
And what they murmur'd the old woman sang
Low to herself, and singing half asleep;
For to herself the rhythmic monotone
Of her own voice, repeating chronicles
Of dreamland, was a lullaby. But light
The breeze that fann'd the flowery casement caught
That low lone strain, and in its bosom bore
The burden of it, with strange sea-sounds blent,
Over the broad blue waters far away
To distant lands: where here and there, in husht
And lonely places, others listening heard,
And in their own tongue sang it o'er again;
Even as the imitative woods repeat
From leaf to leaf in language of their own
The murmur'd message of the wandering wind,
Come whence it may. The old woman warningly

A finger lifted to her lips. The old man,
Without a word, upon the other side
Of the child's couch sat down, and 'twixt his own
He took her other hand, and his bent head
Sank low and lower till his white beard brush'd
His quiet knees. Nothing he understood
Of what had happen'd or was happening there;
But now and then along his wrinkled cheek
A big tear roll'd.

Meanwhile, in Diadum
The Cabinet was waiting for the King,
When Pilgram suddenly arrived—alone.
But to the Ministers he brought an Act
Of Abdication, by His Majesty
Written and sign'd that morning. 'Twas, in truth,
A document they secretly had long
Been hoping for: but on receiving it
They all express'd their sorrowful surprise
And deep regret. A message, Pilgram said,

A sealed compact, well ratified by law and heraldry.—HORATIO.

Too confidential for delivery
Except by word of mouth, he had been charged
To lose no time in giving them. The King,
He then informed them, was departed—bound
On a long journey to a distant land,
Whence distant, too, the date of his return,
And doubtful. Probably not one of them
Would ever see His Majesty again.
The Princess had been dead nigh sixteen years,
She having died the year that she was born.
The King in this calamity had foreseen
The extinction of his dynasty, but still
Deem'd that it was his duty to preserve
The monarchy if possible. Profound
Attention to the Genius of the Age
Had led His Majesty to recognize
That, soon or late, the symbol of a faith
Is all that can remain of it; and men
Are mostly to the symbol more attach'd

Than to whate'er the symbol represents.
But simply as a symbol to exist,
Some image, even if made of wood or stone,
Was more effectual than a human heart
Whose personal palpitations might disturb
The impersonal passivity that best
Befits a symbol. Being well aware
Of what the circumstances of the State
Seem'd to require, the venerable King
(Who felt the infirmities of age increased
By sorrow for his child's untimely death)
Had charged him, Master Pilgram, to construct
A Government Machine, expressly made
And fitted with the necessary gear
For carrying on the business of the realm
With regularity. Now, this machine,
Said Pilgram, was a puppet, that imposed
So perfectly on public confidence
Its representative contrivances,

So have I heard, and do in part believe it.—HORATIO.

The greatest invention of the age.

That it had long successfully replaced
Her Royal Highness, the dead Princess. They
Themselves had seen it, and conversed with it,
And they could testify to its success
In meeting the requirements of the age.
"This puppet," he continued, moving not
A muscle at his auditors' surprise,
"This puppet by the public is supposed
To be the real Princess: and, indeed,
The puppet is extremely popular.
Living princesses sometimes go astray.
The Puppet-Princess never will contract
A misalliance; nor, if rightly work'd,
Act counter to whatever rules are framed
For its procedure. It is warranted
Complete in all its necessary parts;
And, should its clockworks ever need repair,
(For even the best-made puppets now and then
Get out of order) they are so contrived

As to be mended, modified, or even
In case of need completely recomposed
From any sort of cheap material,
By the most clumsy workman. It will be
Prudent, however, to keep these details
A secret. Leave the People's honest faith
In salutary error undisturb'd.
Never reveal the unreality
Of puppets that are popular. Meanwhile,
Your Excellencies will not find it hard
To govern in the room, retaining still
(If my advice you take) the form august,
Of a Departed Royalty. The shades
And echoes of Departed Royalty
Lend solemn influence to the hollow forms
They haunt for ages. Be upon your guard!
The People, an incorrigible dunce,
Is quick to feel, tho' slow to understand;
And, in its awkward fits of sentiment,

So shall you hear of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts, and in this upshot purposes mistook. —HORATIO.

Stupid enough, and strong enough, alas,
The blockhead is, to break the best contrived
Mechanical arrangements for its good.
It is on such occasions that the want
Of a true king may possibly be felt.
But then, they do not happen every day;
And nobody must in this world expect
Perfection. For perfection you will find
My puppet is a perfect substitute."

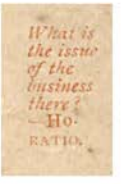
Pilgram declines a seat in the Cabinet.

The Ministers, when their astonishment,
On learning how they had themselves been duped,
Sufficiently subsided to allow
Of calm reflection, saw that Pilgram's plan
Had much to recommend it. They express'd
With cordiality their confidence
In his abilities, and offer'd him
A place in the new Cabinet. But this

His modesty forbade him to accept,
He told them; adding, "One small favour grant,
And I shall be contented. Prove yourselves
Enlighten'd liberal statesmen, and proclaim
Liberty, as a fundamental part
Of the new Constitution!" Much amazed,
Their duty was, they said, imperative
To punish all presumptuous attempts
At taking any sort of liberty
With the new Constitution: and they ask'd
What, in the name of Common Sense, he meant?
He answer'd, with a deprecating smile,
"Your Excellencies are about to start
A Government exclusively maintain'd
Upon appearances, and what appears
Most liberal, looks best. But, after all,
The little that I ask means nothing much.

But obtains for Liberty a place in the Consti-tution.

Liberty is a word in common use:
I have a fancy for the sound of it.
Oblige me on this point!" Then to himself,
"By Jupiter," he mutter'd, "an escape!
I very nearly had allow'd the door
Of the new Constitution to be shut
Unceremoniously in mine own face,
By stupidly forgetting to insert
Something fantastic into it." The news
Popular rejoicings.
Forthwith was circulated everywhere
Of the King's abdication, and the Chart
Accepted in advance by the new Queen,
Proclaiming that henceforth the principle
Of Diadummianian Government
Would be entirely Representative.
The populace hurrah'd, the joy-bells rang,
The cannon bang'd and blazed, and all the realm
Was thrown into a rapture of delight.
Pilgram, meanwhile, behind closed doors unveil'd



The Pseudo-Sovereign, gave the Ministers
A few short simple lessons in the trick
Of the State Mechanism, and explain'd
Its structure. This was all that they required;
For they were most intelligent, and seized
Upon the principle of the machine
Instinctively. Another little wheel
He then inserted. This new wheel henceforth
It would be necessary to wind up
Once every year. 'Twas call'd "THE-QUEEN'S-SPEECH-WHEEL."

Thus was accomplish'd, without one blow struck
Or drop of blood shed, in the favour'd Realm
Of Diadummiania, that great
And glorious Revolution which so far
Surpass'd all other wonderful events
In wonder that, tho' many of course have tried,
And some profess'd, not any one has been

Able to understand it ever since.
The best historians seriously aver
It was the work of Spirits. And they call
Those Spirits, one, the Spirit of the Age,
The other one, the Spirit of Progress. Still,
As nobody knows what those Spirits are,
This explanation leaves it unexplain'd.
Pilgram from Diadum, before the sun
Had set upon that memorable day,
Departed. He was never seen again,
And is forgotten. But his work remains.
It has since then been imitated much.

That is most certain. —HORATIO.

EPILOGUE.

TRANSFIGURATION.

Exit Pilgram.

PILGRAM, when he had shaken hands with all
The members of the Puppet Government,
And wish'd them good success, regain'd the isle,
Where sleeping, and for evermore asleep,
Safe guarded by King Poppy, he had left
The Princess, and her father, and the dame.
His workshop in the palace of the King
He emptied, first, of all its wizard toys;
And all the marvellous machinery
That to those creatures of his fancy once
Gave living motion, in a broken heap
He buried, that hereafter none might guess
The secret of his craft. With steps that sped

Flashing on their invisible course, and fleet
As the untrack'd, unutterable thoughts
That burn and vanish thro' the dazzled brain
Of some bewilder'd poet, from the wreck
His hand had made of all its handiwork
In Diadum, the radiant wanderer pass'd
Back to the island bower his spells had built,
For the asylum of the souls he loved.
The secret path to it he then destroy'd,
Since those 'twas made for needed it no more.
Nor ever again shall foot of mortal man
That pathway tread; whence under sea and land,
No longer now as mortal man disguised,
Enter Phantasos. But in his full effulgence, Phantasos
Return'd to visit Diadema's dreams.
The Sleeping Palace. And when the god to her still chamber came,
No sound was in it save the crone's low chaunt,

With, ever and anon, a fitful note
Wailing from some stray'd fly's small phantom horn ;
Nor any motion but the maiden's breath
That, undulating her calm slumber, sway'd
(There in its snowy cradle sleeping too)
The crimson-petall'd Poppy upon her breast
On one side of his daughter's ivory couch
The Old King sat, and on the other side
Sat the Old Dame, both sleeping ; and between
Those sleepers, as between two hoary rocks
That overhang it sleeps a little tarn
So still and pure that all the lights of heaven
In its pure stillness smile, the maiden slept.
Harmonious with these three husht images
Of perfect peace, the lucid effigy
Of the dead Shepherd Boy, who perish'd there
For love of the King's Daughter, seem'd to breathe
Warm life as, streaming from the fervent west,

The rich Hesperian hues of sunset flush'd
Its pale marmorean beauty. Sleep and Death
Smiled the same smile. Their secret was the same.

The legacy of Phantasos.

Phantasos, round him gazing, sigh'd, "Behold
All my redeeming providence could save
From life's perpetual suicide! A few
Imperishable forms of perisht faiths
In its fantastical divinity;
A few illusions that, unlost, endure,
As types of its endurance, in the fond
Tradition of an immemorial time
That was not, save as in such types it is
Forever, ever seeming to have been;
When Majesty was childlike, Childhood still
God-guarded, and itself the guardian god
Of age, in old days that were young ones; earth
A dreamland; miracles, familiar facts;
Speech, song; faith, truth; and truth, a fairy tale!"

About the sleeping forms he gazed upon
The glimmering air grew darker. Fast outside
The sunset deepen'd. All in a dim glow
Was fading. O'er his countenance divine,
Contemplating his own achievement, stole
The solemn shadow of a power put forth,
And past away from its creative source
Forever into that which it creates.
He mused, "My work is done. But will they last,
The gifts I leave behind me, ere again
Back to my wanderings thro' the world I go?
Be that the care of Mekon! In his guard
I leave them, who knows how to keep my gifts.
Here, in each silent image, sleeps a fount
Of fancy-fertilizing song, that waits
For its discoverer only. And anon,
When there shall be not even one small isle
Unsearch'd in Ocean's solitary lap;
When there shall be no longer any kings

Confided to the care of Mekon

For transmission and distribution.

Whose beards have whiten'd on ancestral thrones ;
No longer any shepherds whose young hearts
Heave with the aspirations that uplift
The lid this heavy world shuts down on all
Else like to trouble its dull dreamless sloth ;
No longer in mysterious bowers (redeem'd
From Beauty's common curse, self-consciousness)
Maidens with mystic crowns to give away,
Nor any mystery left in maid or crown ;
That song shall keep men dreaming of them, taught
Unalter'd by traditionary Eld
To wondering Childhood : or, when Childhood's voice
Is still'd, and autumn's waning suns scarce warm
The later lonesome days, in alter'd tones
(Not glad, and confident, and effortless,
But burden'd with the weight of tears, like winds
Rain-laden, tho' still sweet, still solacing,
Because they breathe from happier climates) sung
By lips grown pale beneath hope's faithless kiss

To hearts too soon, too often, and too late
By love set beating: and from age to age,
As in its last descendants live, tho' changed,
The ancestral features of a high-born race,
Lays, that without it had not been, shall still,
Even tho' unconscious of their ancestry,
Renew the living echoes of that song.
Mekon," the god exclaim'd, "awake! arise!
'Tis Phantasos that calls thee." And the flower
Rose slowly, slowly, on its slender stem,
Whose root had reach'd into the maiden's heart.
Between the crimson petals, that unclosed
Above it with a husht enraptured thrill,
Peep'd a small face, beaming beatitude.
Crown'd was the forehead with a golden crown,
Soft the flusht cheek with slumber's softest bloom
Tender, and still, and starry the deep eyes,
As spheres of summer midnight, and the lips
Swect with the smiles of satisfying dreams.

Enter King Poppy.

"Phantasos, I have heard thee, and am here!
What wilt thou?" But in silent ecstasy
The god, on that crown'd flower-face gazing, felt
What never god had felt before, the trance
Of adoration. "Wild enchantresses,
Whose thaumaturgic revels oft," he cried,
"Thro' Thessaly's witch woods of old I led,
Not all the stars your midnight rites enslaved,
Nor all your metamorphic philtres brew'd
From herbs moon-soak'd on Hecate's altars—no,
Nor Circe's sorceries, nor Medea's spells,
Have ever such transfiguration wrought!
Rejoice, Persephonè, whose favourite here
Hath found his kingdom, and his throne assumed!
And thou, King Poppy, robed and crown'd at last,
Preserve still pure, and still benign dispense,
The riches of thy visionary realm!
So, when all other kings are kingdomless,
Shalt thou still flourish, and to thee the Sons

Of Brutus even shall bow down their heads,
Hailing thy presence, honouring thy power,
And blessing thy beneficence. Farewell!"

Exit Phantasos.

* * * * * * *

The dominions of King Poppy.

He hath them now, the purple and the gold,
Hath all he dream'd of, all his heart's desire!
And what the great all-giving gods denied,
Two dreaming children gave him. For that gift
To children and to dreamers kind is he.
But in his kingdom all are dreamers, all
Are children; even the busy, even the old.
There, where the kingly diadem glows and galls,
There, where the hot blood leaps, and beats, and burns,
There, in the teeming brain, the burden'd brow,
The throbbing veins, the quick unquiet heart,
He wields his sceptre, and asserts his power.
But have you met him by the wayside bank,
Reposing, where the russet wheatfield waves,

Among the cornflowers and the vagrant vetch?
Or have you seen him where the stubble stands
Bristling with spikes the clodded marl, else bare,
And the quail couches and the rear-mice flit
In the hard furrow, and the lark's nest lurks?
Why, earthward bow'd, so heavy hangs his head?

His pre-occupations,

O brave King Poppy, kingly cares hast thou,
For kingly cares all kingly power begets!
And art thou musing on the multitudes
Of weary and yet still impatient souls

His subjects,

That be thy subjects? Sighest thou to thyself,
"How can I ever satisfy them all?
Immeasurable are their wants, and yet
More even than they want do they desire,
And all that they desire, of me they crave!"

His powers and his gifts.

But thou, King Poppy, thou, and thou alone,
For all men canst do all things, and to each
Thy gifts are given with an abundant hand.

Great rectifier of the wrongs o' the world,

Lord of the rock, the spindle, and the shears,

Subservient to whose mute command the Three

Grey Sisters spin life's faded threads afresh.

Or from its tangled skein the knots untie!

Prophet of triumph, who for those that fail

Dost find unfailing solace in defeat!

Brightener and beautifier of dark hours,

Who to the fallen and forsaken art

Faithful, and to the unloved loving still!

Even when the Spectre of To-morrow peers

In at the casement, o'er the sleeper stoops,

And mutters, "Rouse thee, wretch! arise! go forth!

Begin again to suffer and to toil!"

Departing with a whisper'd benison, thou

Dost leave behind thee one last golden gift.

"Take this, poor soul, and keep it! Thine it is,"

Thou whisperest. "Show it not, nor speak of it,

'Tis for thee only. It is all that's left

Still living of thy last delightful dream,
—A lingering memory of it that will last
To sweeten the sad time till I return."

Ave Imperator!

O mightiest of monarchs, and most mild,
Whose kingdom is the fairest upon earth,
The fairest, and the freest! Reign for ever,
Fate's master, yet man's ministering friend!
Guide of stray'd Love's lone footsteps to the goal
That, lost on earth, is in thy realm recover'd!
Feaster of famisht hearts, rebuilder bright
Of ruin'd fortunes, pain's victorious foe,
Grief's comforter, Joy's guardian, good King Poppy!

I knew you must be edified by the magnet ere you had done.—HORATIO.

THE END.

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